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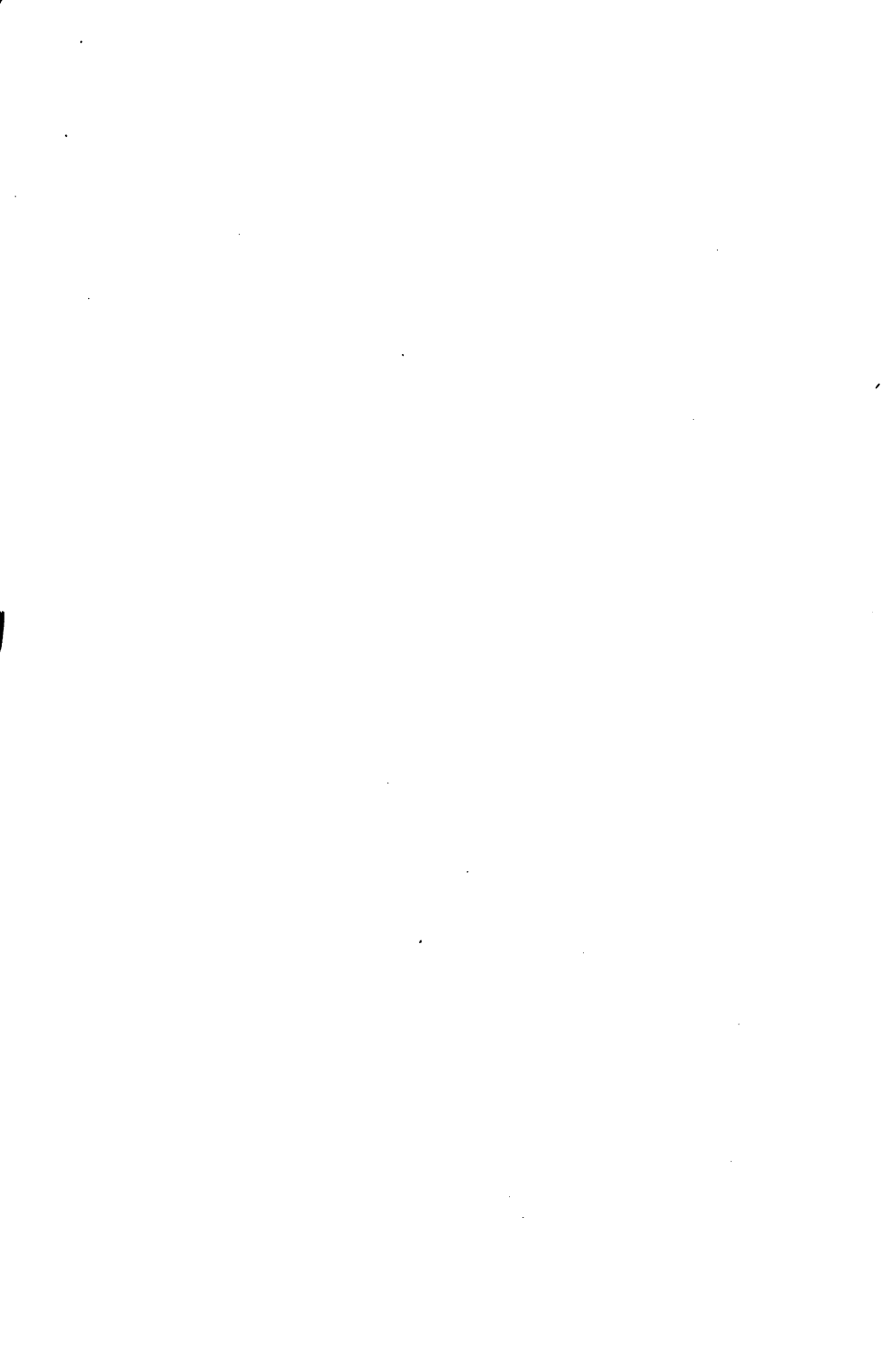


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# **STUDIES OF MEN**



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**BY**

**GEORGE W. SMALLEY**

**LONDON**

**MACMILLAN AND CO.**

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*Latin*

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## CARDINAL NEWMAN

[LONDON, AUGUST 1890]

To most Englishmen of this generation Newman was a great name, and hardly more. To many he was not even that. His work was done long ago. His influence survived, more as a tradition than as an active force. His books were read by a minority: a minority really, I suspect, growing less. The man himself was never seen, or seen only by those near to him and always about him at the Oratory. His correspondence, at one time incessant, had ceased almost entirely, for of late years he had lost control over the muscles of his fingers and could hardly hold a pen, or not without an effort. When he made the effort he could still produce that clear, carefully formed handwriting, which to the last expressed the peculiar precision of his mind. On the general world he made no claim. The art of self-advertisement was not his, and in current affairs his interest was of late but dim. In many companies you might mention Newman's name and elicit no response—nothing to show clearly that people knew whether he was living or not—living in this world or another, as he would say. And yet, to the last, Cardinal Newman was a great spiritual force, and his death leaves a void in the spiritual life of England, and perhaps elsewhere, not at all likely to be filled.

There is no second Newman, no one who resembles or approaches him on the ground where he was strongest.

The question is often asked how a man with great natural acuteness of mind and logical training can accept assertions for which there is no evidence, or no sufficient evidence. Newman seems to have been sent into the world to supply an answer to this question. The question itself, however, is modern, at least in this form. It is a product of the scientific spirit. If the demand for evidence had arisen in the early stages of the Church, the religious history of this planet would have been something very different from what it now is. Most of us have known men whose minds worked with great power up to a certain point and there stopped, and beyond that point did not work at all. They were like a steam-engine, capable of developing ten thousand horse-power within the length of its piston stroke; and a thousandth part of an inch beyond, impotent. Of such minds Newman's was the type, and one of the most brilliant instances. Within his own range he could do anything; no sophistry could escape him; there was no armour in which he could not find a joint if he wanted to. Outside of it, he was credulous as a child.

What one would like most to know is whether the dividing line between belief and scepticism was drawn by an act of will, or whether the boundaries of these two domains were settled for him at the beginning. Faith, said Pascal, is an act of will. No remark in the history of the religious world throws more light on the subject. Pascal's biographers have taken little note of it, though it goes further than anything else toward the solution of the problem of Pascal's life; the union of belief and of scepticism which makes his attitude to

many questions so perplexing, and his real place in the Church still a matter of dispute. Newman, consciously or unconsciously, seems to have adopted the remark of Pascal. His mind, like that of the great Frenchman, was in the beginning, and probably to the end, one which craved exactness, which loved suspense, which, in its normal condition, accepted nothing without proof, which was, in fact, mathematical and scientific. Credulity cannot have been his natural disposition. But he deliberately renounced the use of his reason when he had to answer for himself the deepest questions of religion and of life.

One of the men who knew him best says that on such subjects as revelation, for example, Newman never had any doubts. Religion was with him, not a residuum of probabilities, but a personal matter between him and the Deity. That is a subject I will not pursue further, but what I wish to point out is that his natural subtleness of mind deserted him long before he came to the more awful mysteries. Turn to any of the books in which he handles historical questions relating to Rome, or to the early Church, or to miraculous occurrences which lack altogether such authority as may be deduced from scriptural narrative. Newman accepts these latter without any real evidence, without inquiry even.

Nothing could be more curious than the explanation given by Mr. Mozley of the final step which took him over to Rome. Everybody but Newman himself had long seen that he was going; that his search for the *via media* had no better prospect of success than a quest for the Holy Grail. But Mr. Mozley says that what turned the scale was an article by Dr. Wiseman on the Donatists; a fact, if it be a fact, which would imply that up to this time the moral scandals affecting the



Church of Rome had been the chief obstacle to his going over. He, or if not he his friends, fully believed that the effect of his going would be to re-establish the dominion of the Pope over England; one of the most tremendous revolutions in human affairs that can be conceived of. And whether this convulsion should or should not occur was to be determined by the fact whether a particular view of the opinions held by a sect of the Church of North Africa in the fourth century was or was not correct.

Neither such refinements as these, nor Newman's great attainments, nor even his genius, explain his ascendancy over the English mind, nor his position in the Oxford movement. He had, indeed, an intellectual activity and range rare in any age. He read and poured forth the results of his reading copiously; perhaps too copiously. His was, if not one of the most learned, one of the most various minds of his time. He always seemed, says Mr. Froude, better informed on common topics of conversation than any one else who was present. In theology he had great acquirements; in history also, and in many other matters, and he was such a master of dialectic as Rome herself must admire; rich as she has ever been in professors of casuistry, and of mental gymnastics of every kind. These things and many more were part of Newman's equipment for his life campaign. But they do not explain him, nor his influence, nor the unique reputation he had in England. The secret lay not in gifts or accomplishments, mainly, but in character.

For those who did not know Newman, Froude's account of him is the best. There is nothing in all the long biographies published since his death which sets forth the man so vividly as what Froude says of

him in his letters on the Oxford Counter-Reformation, written in 1881, and published in the Fourth Series of the *Short Studies on Great Subjects*. Froude, always taking his own point of view, starts with a parallel between Newman and Julius Cæsar. The passage that left the deepest impression on me when I first read it was this :—

‘In both there was an original force of character which refused to be moulded by circumstances, which was to make its own way, and become a power in the world ; a clearness of intellectual perception, a disdain for conventionalities, a temper imperious and wilful, but along with it a most attaching gentleness, sweetness, singleness of heart and purpose. Both were formed by nature to command others, both had the faculty of attracting to themselves the passionate devotion of their friends and followers, and in both cases, too, perhaps the devotion was rather due to the personal ascendancy of the leader than to the cause which he represented.’

True indeed is this last suggestion, how true is best indicated by the summary of his work which another comrade has given : ‘Several thousand have thus accompanied Newman, not into the wilderness, but into magnificent churches, and into well-furnished and well-frequented drawing-rooms. But that multitude which responded to the Gospel call on the shores of Genesareth hold aloof and hears not the voice of a shepherd.’ And will long continue to hold aloof. Not by the genius of Newman nor by the persuasiveness of any man or set of men is this Protestant island ever again to be Romanised. If that was the aim of Newman’s life, his life was a failure. But he is of that select band whom no church can rightly claim ; whose

life is not an ambition, but a lesson and a beautiful memory. He might have gone over to Mohammedanism, it would have been the same; and he would have had just as good a chance of carrying his countrymen with him. Three centuries of religious and political freedom have made England what she is to-day, and Newman himself could not have been the man he was had he been born under other influences, or begun life as a subject of the Pope.

It is his literary work which has given him a greater hold on the Protestant millions than all his theological and ecclesiastical efforts. That he was a master of English prose is conceded by those who dispute some of his other titles to renown. He ranks, as a writer, among the first half-dozen writers of the century. Those who would put him at the head of this select group have yet to make good their case. He leaves behind him no great work, no single book that can be called great, unless the *Apologia* be an exception. His forty volumes are forty volumes of Miscellanies. Nearly every one of them was written for some purpose of the moment. The *Apologia* itself was an answer to Kingsley's unhappy question, 'What, then, does Dr. Newman mean?' It is the one by which to the general public he is best known, and probably the only one which will, for its own sake and on its own merits, have any lasting fame or many generations of readers. It has something of the fascination which Newman himself had.

It fascinates men who are not men of letters and who do not care deeply for literature as such—who would make her, and do make her, the handmaid of politics or of statesmanship. One of the foremost men in English public life told me only this week that he never travelled without the *Apologia*. I thought it a

better testimony to the book and to its author than if it had come from a devotee of pure literature. He found in this autobiography something which took him away from the commoner concerns of life; lifted him into a purer air, revealed to him, perhaps, the better part of his own nature. But who is there that makes of any other of Newman's writings his friend and companion?

His sermons were read, are still read. They are, or many of them are, admirable discourses; but they are sermons, and sermons they must remain. His 'Lead, kindly light' is an immortal hymn. That and the *Apologia* excepted, it were rash indeed to predict immortality of the rest. I am almost tempted to call him a great journalist, so fragmentary was his writing; so strictly did it answer the appeal, 'Give us day by day our daily bread'; so accurately adapted was it to the necessities of the particular occasion on which he wrote. Whether he expressed himself in a column or a volume is accidental, not essential. His books did the work, in a measure and within limits, which they were meant to do when written. They affected the thought and to some extent modified the lives of his readers. None the less were they occasional, and none the less are they likely to be ephemeral. That is why it is so difficult to look upon Newman's place in English literature as a very great one for all time to come.

## LORD GRANVILLE

[LONDON, APRIL 1891]

ONE more of the admirable figures belonging to the past generation and not to this is gone, Lord Granville, and of him, too, it has to be said that he leaves no successor. Time was, at least in England, when generation succeeded to generation and the new was not unlike the old. There was a spiritual heirship which never failed. The line of descent was not interrupted. The Amurath of to-day was the lineal offspring and true copy of the Amurath who went before him. There was no break, no real interruption, nothing like the arrival of a new breed, or the development of a different species. But who and where are the men of to-day who stand to those of yesterday in the same relation which those of yesterday bore to those of the day before? They do not exist. The new-comers are excellent in their way; they have considerable qualities; they will get on in the world and leave great names, perhaps; but they none the less belong to a class apart. They may even, if you insist upon it, be better; never the same. I go over again the familiar list of real celebrities, men of real distinction of the last fifty or sixty years, whether here in England or in America—Kinglake, Hayward, Houghton, Browning, Charles Sumner, Emerson, and many more—and I ask again,

who is there like them? They were the product of a time which has passed away.

Lord Granville, who is just dead, was one of the best of this group, and one of the last. Do not think less well of him if I say that he was the outgrowth of an aristocratic society, and that in no other society would he have been possible. I speak of him both in his private and his public capacity; as a person and as a politician or statesman. The new Democracy of Great Britain will do many things; some of them useful, perhaps even great. One thing which it will not do is to bring forth men like Lord Granville, or like any of those who were of his type. The conditions of production are not the same; the product will not be the same. The patrician is passing out of politics; if indeed he be not, as a class, already out. He survives in the person of Lord Salisbury, and in other persons. The individual has not altogether withered, but the class from which he sprang has lost its grip. There is a book, less well-known than it might be, on *The Governing Families of England*. Its title is descriptive of a state of things which exists no longer. The governing families do not govern. They do not even reign.

Lord Granville, to be sure, hardly belonged to these great families, except by virtue of his descent on the mother's side. She was the second daughter of the fifth Duke of Devonshire, and so some of the blood of the Cavendishes flowed in Lord Granville's veins. But from his youth upward he enjoyed those advantages of position which in this country are reckoned to give a man who has them some twenty-five years' start of a man who has them not. He began life at twenty as attaché to the British Embassy in Paris, where his

father was Ambassador. Five years later, at twenty-five, he was Under-Secretary for Foreign Affairs. The present Under-Secretary, Sir James Fergusson, is fifty-nine years old. Lord Granville has been something ever since that time; has been in office, that is, whenever the Liberal party, or its present successor, the Gladstonian party, has been in office. It is forty years since he first became Foreign Minister, at the not too mature age of thirty-six.

Perhaps among the many offices and dignities he held, that which seemed least suitable to him was the Lord Wardenship of the Cinque Ports. Longfellow's fine poem has indissolubly associated that post with the great Duke of Wellington, who held it nearly a quarter of a century. It might be hard to name two men between whom in many essential traits of character the contrast was stronger than between Lord Granville and the Duke of Wellington. Between them came Lord Dalhousie and Lord Palmerston, yet still the transition seems violent. The great soldier, the great Viceroy of India, the great Prime Minister—the pre-eminent Englishman of his time—what was there in common between them and the smooth diplomatist who, ever since 1865, has kept watch and ward at the gateway of England? It sounds simpler to say he has been tenant of Walmer Castle. But they had, all of these men, this one thing at least in common. They all belonged to that Aristocracy which the Democracy is now turning out of doors.

He has, of late years, led that little minority of the House of Lords which now calls itself the Opposition. It was almost as weak when the Liberals were in power as it is now, and to lead this forlorn hope against Lord Salisbury's big battalions required something better

than mere courage. A battle, said Wellington in Spain, is the last resource of a good general. On that maxim Lord Granville acted. He avoided general engagements, and so kept his little squad together. He was an antagonist well suited to Lord Salisbury, whom it would be difficult to surpass or to equal in his own manner. What Lord Granville did was to meet him in another manner; less serious, less in intellectual force, far less in authority. He was adroit, good-humoured, and excelled in handling grave matters with freedom of mind, and with a certain jauntiness which at least gave his followers the impression that no great disaster was to be feared.

The Duke of Argyll has a phrase about Lord Granville to which the rare merit of originality may be accorded. He is speaking of his friend's power of uniting people or of keeping them united, and he calls him 'a born amalgam.' Perhaps it is fairer to give the whole sentence; it generally is. 'Amidst every variety of composition, and in many narrow passages of public policy, Lord Granville seemed a born amalgam.' The testimony is the more striking from the Duke of Argyll, because if an analogous expression had to be sought for him, I fear he might be called a born dissolvent. The Duke is a very able and public-spirited man, who has been found by his colleagues difficult to work with. He does not readily take any point of view but his own; from that, he sees with intense clearness.

This testimony from the Duke of Argyll is the more welcome because it was felt that the House of Lords eulogies on Lord Granville were somewhat dry and inadequate. The Duke meant to have been there, and it is a pity he was not, because, of all living British



orators, he has a stateliness and vigour of style which on such an occasion would have served him well, and served also the memory of the friend whom he deploras. But he was ill, and he sends his speech, in the form of a letter, to *The Times*, where it will be read by more people than would have listened to the oration or read the report of it. He had been Lord Granville's colleague in every Liberal Administration since 1853 down to 1881. The Duke is very generous. He refers to the criticisms on his late colleague as Foreign Minister, and, while admitting that his acts created 'expensive liabilities for the future,' declares that Lord Granville 'never took a single step without full consultation with his colleagues, and every one he did take rested, and must continue to rest, upon the equal responsibility of them all.'

It is generous, but it is also official. Of course it is true theoretically. In fact, it is but partly true. Neither Lord Granville nor any other Foreign Minister ever consulted all his colleagues on all—seldom on any—of the more momentous questions that had to be dealt with. He consulted some. There is always a Cabinet within a Cabinet. When the pinch comes, and publicity comes, and Parliamentary discussion and the comment of the press come, the whole Cabinet is, as the Duke says, equally responsible. The men who never heard a word about the despatch or decision which may have led England into war or discreditable evasion of war, bear their own share of the discredit or disgrace or glory as the case may be. But I used the word generous because the effect of this statement is to relieve Mr. Gladstone, and the Duke of Argyll is under no obligation to say a word which may relieve Mr. Gladstone from any part of the public censure

which rests upon him in consequence of his handling of Foreign or Colonial Affairs while he was Prime Minister. Egypt, South Africa, and the rest, all the various events which during two at least of Mr. Gladstone's administrations brought obloquy upon England, were the direct results of Mr. Gladstone's interference; or, since the word may imply more than I mean, I will say interposition. The cringing to Russia, the cringing to Prince Bismarck, the cringing to the Boers, the general feebleness of English foreign policy from 1880 to 1885, are to be set down to Mr. Gladstone's account, primarily and mainly. Nobody knows it better than the Duke of Argyll, but he was during part of the time one of Mr. Gladstone's colleagues, and he manfully shouldered his share of the discredit.

Sometimes a hint towards a man's character may be had from the nickname which his friends, or perhaps his enemies, bestow on him. Sometimes, but not always; perhaps not often; as those nicknames most current in London of recent years would prove. Lord Granville's was 'Pussy,' and in his case it was, to some extent, descriptive. It was in common use at the Foreign Office. That office is not usually supposed to be in too great a hurry about the transaction of business, nor to be consumed with zeal. But Lord Granville took things so easily that even the Foreign Office was sometimes disturbed. There used to be 17,000 despatches a year. Now there are 70,000. Lord Granville, says one of his eulogists, could deal with the former number; the latter was too much for him. The increase seems to have occurred between his first and his last tenure of the post. If he dealt with the 17,000, he dealt with them at his leisure; at his own time and not to suit somebody else's impatience. In this respect

he followed with fidelity the habits of the interesting animal who lent him her name. Pussy is much too dignified to hurry, and when she is indolent, knows how to be indolent. So did Lord Granville. He carried it too far at times, but the knowledge is invaluable. However, I suppose it was the softness and flexible grace of his nature, and perhaps his sinuous method of proceeding toward his aim, to which he owed his sobriquet. Of course I use sinuous in no ill sense.

I once saw Lord Granville do an act which, slight in itself, I thought very characteristic of him. It was when he was Foreign Minister, and Lady Granville was giving a party at the Foreign Office. The host and hostess were on the landing of the great staircase, receiving their guests, who were streaming in by hundreds. The Prince and Princess of Wales had not arrived, and were likely to arrive at any moment; and such is the etiquette relating to royalty that Lord and Lady Granville had to be on the alert, and must get to the bottom of the staircase before the royalties had passed up the corridor. In this state of expectation, two guests were announced—let us say Mr. and Mrs. Jones—two very humble units in the brilliant procession which was advancing up the staircase. In another country than England it would hardly be understood, but here a guest not known to the Foreign Minister or his wife may easily enough pass both of them in the crush without greeting or recognition. Lord Granville knew Mr. Jones and shook hands with him. Mrs. Jones, with a dozen other ladies equally unremarked, was passing on. The first notes of ‘God Save the Queen,’ proclaiming the approach of the royalties, were heard just then. Lord Granville heard

them, but he stopped Mr. Jones, with that leisurely manner which he had in such perfection, and said: 'Pray introduce me to Mrs. Jones before you go up.' And he found time to murmur a polite greeting in Mrs. Jones's ear, while the music swelled and the Prince and Princess drew near; and he reached the hall to receive them, with an infinitesimal fraction of a second to spare. A slight thing, as I said, but the courtesy of it, and the consideration for an unknown lady, and the wish to give pleasure, and the perfect coolness which enabled him to do what he wanted, when a man less well-bred might have been flurried, were all traits which help explain Lord Granville's attractiveness.

A man is likely to be praised, here as elsewhere in the world, for qualities which he has and other men have not, or have in less degree. It is with character as with bric-à-brac—rarity is an important element of value. So the English extol Lord Granville for speaking fluent and accurate French, and for making an after-dinner speech to which it was possible to listen with pleasure and without too great a strain on the digestion. It were hard to say which of these two accomplishments is in this country the more rare. Prince Bismarck, who regarded Lord Granville with too much of that feeling which a huge mastiff may be supposed to entertain toward the animal who lent a familiar name to the English statesman, used to observe in his cynical way that the late Lord Ampthill was the only Englishman he ever knew who, with good French, had at the same time veracity of nature. It will do no harm if we bracket Lord Granville with Lord Ampthill, and admit that each of them had a mastery of the Gallic tongue, and that each could, as the Persians thought needful for a good man, speak the truth.

They were both straightforward, honourable, loyal men. The after-dinner performances of Lord Granville were almost unique; so happy was he in phrase and with such a gift of saying the right thing where most men would have said the wrong one, or missed the mark somehow or other. He used words nicely; his sentences were put together in a workman-like way; they had both flow and finish.

As for the substance of his public addresses and of his private talk and of his conduct of affairs, I will say briefly that in all these and all other matters he had tact. And if it can be truthfully affirmed of a man that he has tact, not much else need be said. Tact, like charity, covers a multitude of sins, and also of deficiencies, and is besides a virtue of the most positive and admirable kind. Neither of sins nor of deficiencies had Lord Granville any unusual share—he had probably less than most men, and so his tact could all be employed in drawing veils over the sins and deficiencies of other less gifted men. He almost never made a mistake or an enemy.

## MR. BALFOUR

[LONDON, OCTOBER 1891]

### I

IF Mr. Balfour read the papers he might or might not be gratified by the eulogies poured out on him these last few days. But he does not read the papers. That is one of his peculiarities, and one that may account, in part, for the distinction of mind which he preserves amid the confusions and ignoble influences of political life. Emerson said: 'If we should give to the great writers, to Milton, or Bacon, or Wordsworth, the time we give to the newspapers—but who dare speak of such a thing?' I know not whether Mr. Balfour is a reader of Emerson, nor whether he ever spoke in public of such a thing as his omission to read those sources of intelligence—and of other things—which we call newspapers. But his view and Emerson's are in effect the same, and I imagine no public man of his time has known so little of the contents of the press from day to day as Mr. Balfour. Of course he loses something by this abstention. It is conceivable that he may also gain something. In most matters there is a balance of loss and gain, and Mr. Balfour long since satisfied himself that for him there was more to be gained in other quarters than in the daily press of England. Had his lot been cast in America his view might have been

### B

different. That is a matter of speculation into which we need not now enter.

But what I wish to point out is that Mr. Balfour's power of not reading newspapers may be a key, or one key, to a very original and interesting character. The conception of public life without newspapers is individual; entirely peculiar to him, I imagine. I know of nobody else in England who holds it or practises it. The reading of newspapers may be likened to the use of intoxicating liquors, of which some people take more and some less; hardly anybody abstains altogether. I mean hardly anybody in public life in this country; a few fanatics excepted who are hardly in public life. So engrossing are the occupations of those who have the conduct of affairs that many find little time to devote to newspapers. You may often hear a Minister who is questioned in the House of Commons about some story in a paper make answer that he has not seen it. He reads, as it were, by proxy. The journals of the day are read for him by one of his private secretaries, and marked, or extracts from them laid before him; extracts which refer to his own department of business.

If you travel up to town by rail any morning you will see how the Englishman of the period reads his paper. He toils through it with a conscientiousness which is admirable; all conscientiousness is admirable. He reads only one, but he reads that thoroughly; editorials and all, and the beholder wonders in what condition his mind must be when the operation has been accomplished, and the last word reached. Does he digest this multifarious mass? But such an inquiry takes us too far. I want the newspaper reader of the railway only as a contrast, and he would be just as good a contrast if he had been caught in a club or at

his own breakfast-table ; best of all perhaps at the latter, where he absorbs all this printed wisdom into his system, very much as he does his coffee and boiled eggs.

An eminent Gladstonian, who will some day lead the remains of the Gladstonian party, has a theory that the influence of the English press is slight, and the influence of the leading article, or editorial, slighter still. He is a man who finds pleasure in paradox. But if he really held the view which it amuses him to maintain in the presence of journalists, he might be asked to consider the newspaper reader of the kind just mentioned ; him and his ways. If he studied him, he would as soon think of saying that his coffee and boiled eggs had no influence on his physical system, as that his newspaper had no influence on his mental system. Later in the day the same man pours out to his neighbour what he has gathered ; each of them imparts these same views to the other, and neither of them suspects that his own or his friend's wisdom is not entirely spontaneous and original. His thinking has been done for him, and done so cleverly that he fully believes he has done it himself. There is a story that Southey was once describing to Mme. de Stael the distribution of his time : so many hours of reading before breakfast on one subject, and so many hours after breakfast on another subject, and so many hours writing, and then more reading, till the whole day was gone. 'And pray, Mr. Southey,' inquired the Frenchwoman, 'when do you think ?' The same question might be put to the kind of reader I have been describing.

Mr. Balfour, it may be imagined, does his thinking and much else during the hours when the Philistine is having his done for him. Upon his first entry into



public life his opponents derided his gifts as academic. They thought him a man of books, and, what they despised still more, a mere thinker, a man to whom metaphysics were more than the machine; another John Stuart Mill, and a lesser. It was long before he troubled himself to disturb this notion. He took no very active part in the business of the House, or even in the conduct of those affairs which the Fourth Party, of which he was a kind of honorary member, made their own. He was thought indifferent if not indolent. He was in no hurry. He seemed to care little for the reputation to be gained by debate. He spoke none too often, and rather negligently. The observer in the House, he who took note of novelties, might sometimes hear a flashing sentence which fell from Mr. Balfour's lips in a tone very unlike the deliverances of the average debater; a sentence equally incisive and illuminative. The manner was gentle, easy, impassive; as if the object he had before him in speaking were hardly worth an effort. This manner misled the House, which is jealous, and tolerates nothing like neglect of its own good opinion, and demands conformity to its own standards. It changed very gradually. It was never really flung off till Mr. Balfour became Irish Secretary, and even then the manner changed less than the man.

There was a point of likeness between him and a very different personage, Lord Hartington. Both of them wore the same armour; neither cared one straw for the shafts which the Irish brigade launched against them. It used to be matter of complaint against Mr. Balfour that he showed too plainly his contempt for the calumnies and insults which the Irish showered upon him as they had upon every previous Irish Secre-

tary, and will upon his successor, and, I suppose, upon all Irish Secretaries to the end of time. The Irish are deficient in imagination, and slow to perceive that their Saxon foe may really despise accusations which he and they know to be the offspring of political animosity. Presently, however, they discovered that they had met their match in debate, and more than their match. If the new Secretary had ever been indolent he had woken up. Serious duties had fallen upon him, and in the presence of serious duties the dilettante element in his character vanished. The intellectual energy and the courage which he had heretofore applied to the problems of the closet were now seen to be equally capable for the market-place and the forum. Mr. Balfour became the most formidable debater whom the Irish had had to confront in that office. They had set themselves to exasperate him, and they ended by being themselves exasperated. They could not make him angry, and they were angry because they could not. The power of polite repartee was a greater power than the mere abuse and vulgar invective which it was employed to meet. A storm of insulting personalities raged about him. The Irish had met nothing quite so disconcerting before as this nonchalance of bearing, united with the capacity of easy retort upon those who beset him. Mr. Foster, Sir George Trevelyan, Sir Michael Hicks-Beach, each in his own way, had proved not perhaps unequal to the contest, but sensitive. It was possible to inflict pain on all of them, and possible for none of them wholly to conceal the pain he endured; heroically but visibly. Mr. Campbell Bannerman puzzled them by his stoicism—the stoicism of a tough nature on which mere taunts fell harmlessly—but his attitude was purely defensive, and he had no talent for

making his foes suffer otherwise than from the failure of their attacks.

Mr. Balfour had only to be himself. He is tall and slim, with long legs, and his long legs were for awhile an Irish grievance. The Parnellites—all the Irish were then Parnellites—accused their owner of ‘sprawling’ on the Treasury Bench. The awful accusation has again been heard since the late Secretary has become First Lord of the Treasury. Dr. Holmes said that the American was the only person who knew what to do with the small of his back, and he sits on it. I am afraid Mr. Balfour did as much, and when this feat had been accomplished, his legs seemed to become their own masters; they wound themselves into knots and unwound themselves, and assumed various angles to the rest of his body, and each attitude was to the angry Irishman on the watch for evil meanings an attitude of offence. The worst of it was that these contortions occurred while the attack on him from the Irish benches was hottest, and while every nerve and sinew in his body, legs included, ought to have been strained and tense to meet the storm. What business had an Irish Secretary’s lower limbs to be amusing themselves while the Irish patriot was proving the Irish Secretary to be a monster of cruelty and iniquity? No doubt it was provoking. It was more provoking still when the same legs were called on to support the weight—no very great weight—of their rightful master; when he was, in House of Commons phrase, on them, and meeting the hurricanes and whirlwinds of Parnellite rhetoric with a calmness and a polished serenity of deportment which did more than anything else to convince the patriotic and anguished Irish soul that the hurricanes and whirlwinds had been got up in vain. If

I may be forgiven for saying so, there was in the treatment which both Mr. Balfour and Mr. Parnell accorded to the representatives of Ireland something equally hateful to these representatives. Mr. Parnell was their superior, and there is, on the whole, nothing which the inferior soul so much resents as superiority.

## II

If there be in fact—it is what the Irish are for ever alleging against him—anything cynical or contemptuous in Mr. Balfour, it is, I think, intellectual and not emotional or supercilious. He has a clear intelligence, and with it a certain impatience of that sort of intelligence which is less clear than his own. He treated Mr. Parnell with respect—no question about the clearness of his intelligence or that he was a man who, so far as mental gifts and force of character went, was entitled to respect. He treated the rest of the Irish with civility. This latter attitude did not prevent his saying many plain things to them. They were said within the strictest limits of decorum, and were for that reason the more deadly. It is a secret which none of the Irish except Mr. Parnell has discovered. You might say of them, or an Irishman might, as Grattan said of Corry: ‘There is scarce a word they utter which is not a violation of the privileges of the House.’ The passage is interesting enough to continue :—

‘But I did not call him to order. Why? Because the limited talents of some men render it impossible for them to be severe without being unparliamentary, but before I sit down I shall show him how to be severe and Parliamentary at the same time.’

It is not quite in Mr. Balfour’s manner to announce

beforehand that he is going to crush an enemy ; he is not Irish, he is Scotch. But Grattan's menace is one which Mr. Balfour has often fulfilled. He is a debater who answers to the description of Fox, probably the greatest debater the House ever saw,—he goes out in all weathers. This is not comparing him to Fox ; comparisons may almost always be avoided, and are almost always misleading. Nor is it much of a compliment to say of any man that he reminds us of some other man. It is enough if he reminds us of himself, if he be individual, genuine, and a real force.

Five years ago Mr. Balfour was, like Napoleon Third, the nephew of his uncle. To-day it is not quite clear whether the uncle or the nephew be the stronger man. Lord Salisbury is sixty-one, Prime Minister, Foreign Minister, the chief of a great party. Mr. Balfour is but forty-three, and his public career may be said to date from his acceptance of the Irish Secretaryship. But he is to-day leader of the assembly which, little as Lord Salisbury likes it, is the real centre of political authority in this country. He has made himself in these few years what he is—one of the first three debaters in the House. He has made himself master of the art not only of debate but of legislation. His conduct of the Land Purchase Bill was probably the most skilful among some similar exploits because the Land Purchase Bill was one of the most difficult measures ever submitted to the House, and because Mr. Balfour succeeded where Mr. Gladstone had failed.

His education as a debater and legislator and master of Parliamentary strategy and tactics had to be carried on while he was governing Ireland, and governing it with a success for which there is no precedent in these days. His duties in Dublin were more difficult than

his duties in Westminster. He had to meet in Ireland the most powerful politico-agrarian organisation of modern times ; to deal with a conspiracy, criminal in part and dependent on crime, to which a great portion of the Irish people were parties. He had to meet in the House of Commons one of the two or three greatest Parliamentary leaders of this century : the rival of Peel and of Disraeli. He had been Mr. Gladstone's pupil and friend. Like everybody who comes in personal contact with that commanding nature, he had felt its influence deeply. People said he would never shake it off, just as Sir Stafford Northcote never shook it off. But Mr. Balfour is made of sterner stuff than the amiable Devonshire baronet. He broke with Mr. Gladstone completely. He emancipated his mind from the servitude in which the elder statesman would have kept it. He drew the necessary distinction between the Gladstone of other days, whom we all honoured and still honour, and the Gladstone who took the plunge of 1886, and whose moral nature seemed from that moment to suffer a transformation not less extraordinary than that of his political principles.

Mr. Balfour, like others, had to choose between an old friendship and the obligations of public duty. He chose with no more hesitation than any man of a generous nature must feel when such an alternative is put before him. The obligation of public duty was paramount ; it is a tradition of English statesmanship that it should be paramount. He exposed Mr. Gladstone's perversions and prevarications of Irish affairs. His speeches on Mitchelstown and the even more melancholy Dopping incident, and Mr. Balfour's replies to them, may serve as samples. Not since Disraeli quitted the House of Commons had Mr. Gladstone

been met in this spirit or with this firmness. He hardly knew what to make of it. He assumed towards his old friend that air of pained regret for his unaccountable errors which has often proved so effective. But in this case it was not effective. Fact and argument were too much for rhetoric; the truth prevailed: the victory in debate rested with the younger man, and Mr. Gladstone changed his methods.

The Gladstonian idolaters, in the press and elsewhere, told you in those days that Mr. Balfour 'insulted' their god. I heard the same thing said of Mr. Bright, when Mr. Bright refused to follow his lifelong friend and leader down the steep grade that led to the Parnellite camp. They meant, in each case, the same thing. It was an 'insult' to Mr. Gladstone to cling to an opinion or a policy after he had abandoned it. It was an insult to prove him in the wrong; to state facts when he took refuge in fancies; to rely on evidence rather than on the accuracy of his emotions. All these offences Mr. Balfour committed; and Mr. Bright before him. To both of them the necessity of breaking with a friend was distressing, and to both of them loyalty to truth and to reason and to the Union were more than sentiment and affection.

Mr. Balfour gained a hold at the same time on the people. It may be doubted whether he greatly cared to. His mind is not of that order which requires the confirmation of a popular majority for the verification of truth. He would not, I think, put the Sermon on the Mount to vote, either in the House of Commons or before the constituencies. He has convictions which a general election would not upset; beliefs which are not at the disposal of a political caucus. He would dare to say an unpopular thing, or to do one. The

outcry against his Irish policy, whether in Ireland or England, never moved him. He had studied the situation ; he had made up his mind ; he had adopted a policy. If the country and the House agreed with him and supported him, well and good. He rejoiced in the support for the sake of the policy he thought wise, and of the country to which it would restore peace. If not, if his majority failed him, he would hand over his authority to another. But in no circumstances can I conceive Mr. Balfour undergoing a conversion because a majority was not to be had at any other price. Never would he have appealed to the people of England at one election to give him a majority to maintain the Union and to deal with Ireland independently of the Irish, and when it had been refused have discovered that Ireland could only be dealt with dependently upon the Irish, and by disunion.

Nevertheless—or may it have been because he would neither flatter them nor surrender to them?—the people of England presently began to respect this young man, and to like him. He succeeded to that inheritance of sympathetic goodwill which a former colleague had flung away. He became a popular favourite without ever making an appeal to popular passion or prejudice or a single concession to popular caprice. It was creditable both to the people and to him. Mr. Bryce notes it as a trait of the American people that they expect conformity, and neither understand nor respect independence, nor tolerate a statesman or writer who refuses to obey their wish. I do not believe it. I believe the exact contrary. I think it far more likely to be true of England than of America, because the political training and general intelligence of the new majority in England are so far inferior to the



American standard. Mr. Balfour's career shows that it is not true, or not always true, here. More than that, he is by birth, and by nature, what is called an aristocrat, and not a democrat. In tastes and in feelings as well as in opinion and in his political ideas, he is remote from any conceivable democratic view. But even this remoteness and this spirit of self-reliance do not diminish the regard in which he is held. He attracts a greater audience than any other of his party to any platform from which he speaks. He speaks with tact and good sense and good breeding, and knows how to reach other minds.

When the Tories of Birmingham revolted against the edict of the Carlton Club which condemned them to accept a Liberal Unionist candidate, the situation was perhaps the most perilous, from a party point of view, which has occurred since the Unionists have been in power. The local managers simply refused to be bound by the solemn compact between their leaders and the Liberal Unionists. They were determined to reclaim that share in the Parliamentary representation of Birmingham to which their numbers entitled them. As so often happens with the local 'bosses,' they shut their eyes to all consideration of general policy. For a moment, it seemed as if the alliance between Tories and Liberal Unionists might be endangered by this stubbornness in Birmingham,—an alliance on which depended not merely the existence of their Government but the existence of the Union. Mr. Balfour was asked to go down and talk to these rebellious and stiff-necked gentlemen of the Midlands. He went. He made them a short speech,—short, but so full of sweetness and light, so persuasive, so convincing, that they were completely won over. They renounced their

claims. They submitted themselves to the authority of the Carlton and of the Cabinet. They did what they were wanted to do. The breach was healed ; the peril averted. It was said at the time, and I think truly said, that nobody but Mr. Balfour could have wrought this miracle. Wrought it was, at any rate, and by him, and it is a good illustration of the singular fascination he exercises upon popular bodies as well as upon the House of Commons and upon individuals.

## III

[LONDON, MAY 1894]

They who did not hear and do not read Mr. Balfour on Monday on the Welsh Disestablishment Bill, and who yet care to know what sort of a speech he made, may well be puzzled by the conflicting opinions of the papers. 'One of the most brilliant, searching, and impressive speeches that he has ever delivered in the House of Commons,' says the chief Unionist authority. Then if you turn to the party organ of Liberalism you read: 'His speech on the first reading of the Welsh Church Bill was one of the tamest and the most perfunctory he has ever delivered in the House of Commons.' This you may think nothing but the natural antagonism of friend and foe. But it is not quite that. There is a streak of fairness even in politics, if you know where to look for it. Turn to another Liberal organ and you will find this speech described as expert, unequal, but with intervals of eloquence and force, and its tone almost consistently good. Take a third Liberal authority, and you will be assured that Mr. Balfour made the best of a bad case. A fourth Liberal thinks nothing could have been more admirably attuned than

the opening, that it was in the best Gladstonian parliamentary style, and that it 'had that elevation of tone which Mr. Balfour perhaps recalls to one more than any other speaker left in the House.'

As to Mr. Balfour, it may be said on the evidence of the best judges on both sides of the House of Commons, that he is rapidly becoming a very great member of Parliament indeed. I have heard from a dozen sources a remark to the effect that Mr. Gladstone's mantle has descended upon him and not upon any of those who sat by the great Liberal's side. Mr. Balfour inherits the great traditions which to Mr. Gladstone were always precious; traditions from which he never departed till late in life, and seldom then. He has something of the dignity, the elevation of tone, the courtesy, the grand manner, which distinguished Mr. Gladstone. It might be hard to say who else on the floor of the House has them. The Speaker has, and he has also the authority which, in a measure, belongs to his office but which is never really effective unless it be personal also.

On one ever-memorable occasion Mr. Peel showed how full the measure of it was, when Mr. Gladstone totally failed to exert his as Leader of the House—I mean the night of the riot last year. I always thought, and I still think, that Mr. Gladstone knew himself to be responsible for that deplorable explosion of pent-up passions—passions which he, perhaps unwittingly at first and beyond question in the end regretfully, had provoked. So depressing was the effect upon himself that when the Speaker called upon him to give an account of what had happened, he could not. During the tumult, the din of battle, the exchange of blows, the old man had sat with a white, scared face, shrinking from the reality which was before him. He had

made no effort to quell the riot. It is no reproach to an old man past eighty that he had not. But neither had Mr. Balfour, nor was Mr. Balfour, when asked by the Speaker for his statement, in much better condition to give it than Mr. Gladstone. It was not a question mainly of age, but of temperament, and both men seemed to feel the same abhorrence of a violent scene, and the same incapacity to deal with it or to accept any part, even for good, in such a transaction. Whereas the mere return of the Speaker to the chair, his mere presence, his look, and the sound of his magnificent voice, every tone instinct with command, had sufficed to restore order. I had no intention of recurring to this painful episode, but it throws light on the analogies between Mr. Gladstone and Mr. Balfour. Neither of them was, or is, an ideal leader, because both of them possess in a high degree certain qualities which fit them for other things than the leadership of an assembly which is often turbulent and often, like Martha, anxious about many things which are not vital nor of high import.

Mr. Balfour's growth as leader and as debater has been retarded much more by his qualities than by his defects. It was long before he could persuade himself to take politics very seriously ; and I am certain that nobody else could have persuaded him to do it. The two things he had most in common with Mr. Gladstone were sweetness of nature and intellectuality. Mr. Gladstone was put so early to political work that the more delicate and tender traits of his character took on a certain robustness which was perhaps in the beginning foreign to him. The gold was alloyed to make it more fit for the mechanical arts of public life. Mr. Balfour entered politics as an amateur, and an amateur

he long remained. He served no regular apprenticeship. His membership of the Fourth Party left him full leisure for the pursuits he preferred. As a statesman, Ireland taught him his fullest if not his first lesson. To govern that country, and to govern it firmly and well, is no holiday task, nor can any man emerge from a four years' experience of rule at Dublin Castle without a feeling that he has been tried as by fire. If he is not consumed he comes out the stronger. It adds temper to the steel, but there must be steel.

Then, in the true English fashion, having thoroughly learned the high and difficult business of administration and of government, Mr. Balfour was summoned to a post requiring totally different qualifications. Upon the death of Mr. W. H. Smith, he was made leader of the House of Commons. Perhaps you remember with what eager glee, during the first few weeks and even months, the Gladstonian organs predicted and proclaimed his failure. He made various mistakes. He provoked hostilities among his own followers, some of whom talked of mutiny and of deposing their chief. Mr. Balfour's way of meeting the revolt was entirely characteristic. 'By all means,' he said, 'I shall be only too delighted if you will; and if you disown my authority I shall go to-morrow.' The rebels collapsed. Quite slowly, as if there were always leisure and always time enough for everything, he learnt his business. The only real obstacle to his success was his easy indifference. He had other interests in life than the second reading of a stupid bill, or the discipline of a party which, if not stupid, was, in Mill's time, as he told us, the stupider. He came down to the House late and went away early. Not on those terms can this zealous and

exacting body be controlled. I imagine that Mr. Balfour went through a struggle with himself as he did with the House. He had to choose whether he would lead or not. He came to see clearly what sacrifices leadership involves, and what Mr. Disraeli meant when he said that the secret of leading the House of Commons is to be always there. It is a hard trial and a hard life, physically and mentally. But Mr. Balfour resolved to accept the conditions, and to apply himself to the duties of the post he had accepted as he would to a problem in metaphysics. From that moment his success was secure,—secure but very far from complete. It is not complete yet. He is growing. If anybody thinks that a criticism, perhaps he will recall the definition of wisdom as ‘to grow old learning,’ and perhaps he will remember that Mr. Gladstone once accepted it as a description of his own life.

As matters now stand, Mr. Balfour has but one rival in the House as a debater, and if you look at oratory as something more than a provision for the contentious necessities of the moment, he has none. Alone he touches the note which rang from the silver trumpet that was Mr. Gladstone’s. Alone he breathes the upper air. Alone he treads with a sure foot the heights which Mr. Bright and Mr. Gladstone—and in our time no other—trod before him. He is not yet, and he probably may never be, the equal of either, but he is of kin to both. He has not Bright’s noble simplicity. He has not Mr. Gladstone’s infinite variety, nor his august personality. But he has the intellectual integrity of the one, and the power which the other possessed in a still higher degree, of broadening the range of debate and lifting it into a purer region.

He is capable, and I know not who else is capable, of

the heroic strain in the commonly rather prosaic affairs which a Legislature has to deal with. In a few sentences near the end of the Welsh speech there is a tone which has hardly been heard in the House since death closed the lips of Mr. Bright. He said : 'I cannot say how this battle of disestablishment, of which the first guns were fired on Thursday night, will end. I dare not venture to prophesy, for I do not know. But this I will say, that this is one of those causes in which, if we are to be defeated, I would rather perish with the side that loses than triumph with the side which is victorious.' That is what I mean by the heroic, which I might equally well cite as an example of spiritual exaltation. It is followed almost at once by the philosophical estimate, never wanting from any speech on a subject on which Mr. Balfour really feels deeply :

'I suppose we all attempt to gauge and estimate the forces which are silently at work moulding the future of society. I believe that those forces are on our side. (Hear, hear!) I believe now that the prospects of the Church Establishment, even in the face of this bill, are far brighter than they were a generation ago. I think a new spirit is springing up. The democracy, which is slowly moulding for good or for evil the creed on which it will attempt to guide the destinies of this country, is not, I think, in harmony with the kind of speeches to which we have listened to-night or with the idea which lies behind such speeches. I believe the democracy hold, as I hold, that for the welfare of the community this standing witness to great spiritual forces in every parish of the country is a vital necessity, and that they will not allow the machinery by which these great objects are to be carried out to be impaired, either to satisfy the greed of a too economical ratepayer or to satisfy the envy of rival Non-conformist sects.'

There are in this same speech other passages which reveal the real Balfour very clearly, but I will make no more quotations. These are enough to indicate that the Leader of the Opposition understands well how to appeal to the whole House, and that there are subjects of which the interest is to him immensely greater than the interest of politics.

*Feb. 1895.*—Mr. Balfour's reappearance as a theologian, long expected though it has been, stirs no little interest among not theologians only, but among philosophers, men of science, and men of the world. The newspapers, which seldom seek to handle such matters editorially, discuss him with animation, if not always with a very clear view of what he is aiming at. They discuss him in certain quarters, also, with a feeling of dismay, due to their perception of the fact that the Conservative leader is in the high sense of the word a sceptic; such a sceptic, that is, as Montaigne was, as Pascal was, and perhaps, nearest of all, as Newman was. His spirit, where it is not sceptical, is essentially scientific. Perhaps there is not so very much difference between the two. His book is entitled *The Foundation of Belief*. At first sight, or as a first impression, he may seem rather to unsettle the foundations than to strengthen them. That will not, I think, be found the ultimate effect of this treatise. It might almost be described as a new religion on the ruins of the new philosophy. That would come as near the truth as most epigrams do. But the book cannot be dismissed in an epigram, and of course cannot be reviewed by cable. I do not attempt an account of it. I wish only to remark that it cannot be put aside, either by metaphysicians or theologians. It is, from whatever point



of view you look at it, a contribution to the thought of the time on the most important and difficult problems of all time.

Mr. Balfour has long been a philosophical student. He knows the literature of his subject. Long before he made a name in politics or led a party or graduated as a statesman, he was known to his friends and to a few readers of unusual books as an acute and daring thinker, trained in a severe school of dialectic. Historically and ethically he is master of his subject, and as a logician he has not many superiors in this or other fields. Thus equipped, he has plunged into what may still be called the conflict between religion and science. He attacks Rationalism and Naturalism, of which he deems an ethical Nihilism the inevitable outcome. He rejects the philosophy of the senses. He declares the assumption of the existence of a God more defensible on scientific grounds than the proposition of science that there is an independent material world. Nevertheless, he shrinks throughout from anything like a definite statement of belief. He offers only a provisional solution of existing difficulties. Once more he affirms, as all theologians have had to affirm, the necessity of faith, which he curiously qualifies as a faith not in excess of reason, as if reason had anything to do with that matter. The synthesis of which he is in search, a synthesis in which scientific thought and religious thought may find a common denominator, is not to be had without sacrifices on both sides.

Some of the admissions and assertions Mr. Balfour makes must leave the orthodox aghast. Most certainly they will not accept his processes, hardly even his conclusions, nor yet his definition of the knowable and unknowable, and still less his adoption of Hume's

arguments. Hume, nevertheless, and his own mind, led him to a conclusion remote from Hume's, and though he will not base a conclusion on the old argument from design, which Hume refuted once for all, he reaches in the end the theory that the origin of the world must be sought in the presupposition of a rational being. On that the new religion is to rest, and the new religion on such a basis is not so very far off from the old, except that it will contain a good deal less of dogmatic theology and much more of spiritual insight, as well as of that unflinching effort toward truth to which the intellect and reason have more to say than mere unaided faith. As a whole, Mr. Balfour's book will be thought an attempt to make a stand against Agnosticism, and so it is; but Agnosticism has none the less a firmer hold on his mind than he himself is aware of, and the ultimate effect of his speculations may supply a foundation for scepticism rather than a foundation for belief.

## MR. PARNELL

[LONDON, OCTOBER 1891]

SINGULAR indeed is the decree of destiny which on the same day struck down two of the three foremost men in the House of Commons. Mr. W. H. Smith was its actual leader, Mr. Parnell had proved himself its master; and whatever may be said of his position at the moment of his death, the record of the last ten years cannot be blotted out, and that record may almost be summed up in a sentence. This one man, an Irishman, at first without a following, and at the last with only a minority of one-eighth of the whole body, set himself to defy, to degrade, and to overmaster the most ancient and powerful and dignified legislative body in the world. And he succeeded. He forced Parliament to tolerate him, to listen to him, to give up its time to do the work he wanted done, to register his policy in many and many an Act, to treat with him as an equal, to accept whatever humiliation he chose to put upon this august assembly, and finally almost to pass a bill for the disunion of the Kingdom it exists to protect. He entered in 1881 upon a struggle with the most powerful party leader of modern times, who had not only a party, but the whole force of English public opinion behind him in his effort to maintain the union of these kingdoms and to put down rebellion. In five years he had

beaten him, forced him to capitulate, imposed his own policy upon him, imposed himself upon him, and become his leader and the real leader of what was left of a proud party with a splendid history. He had been, during this same period and after, the true author of the agrarian and social revolution which has transformed the Ireland of 1880 into the Ireland of to-day. There could not be a better measure of this man's transcendent ability than the difference between the two.

It would be difficult to name any ruler or leader in history who has accomplished so much with such slender means. In the first place, it is Mr. Parnell's work, and his alone. He has had no colleagues. He has had domestics. There were among the eighty-five Irish Members half a dozen who have shown signs of capacity for particular kinds of work, agitators, rhetoricians, smart attorneys, and the like, but not one with one single gift of leadership or of statesmanship, Mr. Parnell alone excepted. He treated them like domestics. He appointed them and removed them and paid them. They were put to whatever work he thought useful. They did what they were told. None of them were in his confidence. They resented it, but submitted. They were aware of his superiority. When their chance came, they turned on him.

What, then, was his mental and moral equipment? The second will not detain us long. His morals consisted in not having any. To him scruples of conscience were so many political obstacles, and he swept them away. One of those Liberals whom force of circumstances made his ally, himself a man who could on occasion override punctilios, was wont to describe Mr. Parnell as a man *sans foi ni loi*. He stuck at nothing. He would tell the truth when the truth

was useful, and the other thing when that was useful. He was a master of intrigue and of all the baser arts of public life. For human nature he had a sovereign contempt, and he believed that men were to be ruled by appeals to what is worst in them; and to that he appealed accordingly. The whole Home Rule agitation was based on that—the appeal, primarily, to selfishness, to covetousness, to what Mr. Parnell thought the natural desire of everybody to possess what did not belong to him. He succeeded. What other test could any political leader desire? He conferred in this way great material advantage upon great bodies of his countrymen, and he demoralised and debauched the Irish conscience. Is any material or political advantage great enough to repay a nation for its moral deterioration? When Mr. Parnell's services to Ireland are summed up, that, too, is a question which will have to be considered.

Probably Mr. Parnell had no liking for crime, but neither had he any detestation of the criminal. If outrages in Ireland and dynamite in London helped on the cause of Irish independence, he welcomed the aid of the men who employed either or both. The Phoenix Park murders seem to have shocked him. To all other crimes he showed a callous indifference, and some of his latest public efforts were in behalf of the unchanged scoundrels who tried to blow up London and assassinate Members of Parliament by wholesale. He will always be remembered as an Irish patriot. Yet the supreme passion of his life was not so much love of Ireland as hatred of England. It is not likely that he ever deluded himself as to the injury Home Rule would do England. He wanted Home Rule, and much more than Home Rule, for Ireland's sake, and wanted

it all the more because it would impair English prestige and disintegrate the English Empire.

His abilities are best judged by his work. When you reckon up what Mr. Parnell has done, you have reckoned up the man. His natural aptitudes for public life seemed few; of the showier kind he had almost none. He was no orator, but as he had to speak he taught himself the art of saying with perfect precision and perfect clearness what he wished to convey to his audience. He could calculate political forces with a precision not less remarkable. His study of politics was purely scientific. In his long contest with the House he respected nothing which other men respected. He used the Irish peasants as Napoleon used the French peasants, and the conscription was hardly a more terrible instrument than the evictions which Mr. Parnell compelled his confiding countrymen to undergo. Mr. Gladstone said they were sentences of death. If they were, Mr. Parnell pronounced them.

If his aim was not rebellion, it was revolution, and he announced his motto in his earliest speech: 'All or any means' to compass his ends. If he did not join the Physical Force party, it was because he thought it easier to destroy the Constitution from within than from without. It was his plan to make himself master of the English citadel and to turn their own guns against the Saxons; for he declared that he would make the Government of Ireland impossible, and so he did, till Mr. Balfour appeared on the scene. He first conceived, or first put in practice on a great scale, the idea of making the Irish abroad support the Irish war at home. He opposed the Plan of Campaign, not because it was dishonest and immoral, but because he saw clearly that it must fail.

Every one of these incidents in his history is an indication of his intellectual character. He could organise, he could administer, he could govern. Had he lived, he was the best argument for Home Rule. The man who ruled Ireland without the machinery of government, and against the Government, who held it for so many years in the hollow of his hand, could surely have ruled it with law and authority on his side. Or, rather, he could have ruled one Ireland. Whether he could have ruled the other, with wealth, intelligence, energy, and most of the forces which are most potent in life against him, is another question. It is doubtful whether he had any genius for war or for armed conflict.

Mr. Parnell's success in proving the Pigott letters forgeries was complete enough to blind those who wished to be blinded to the gravity of the judgment against him on other points. The judgment of this tribunal will, nevertheless, stand, and Mr. Parnell must go down to posterity convicted of complicity in a criminal conspiracy. He was, moreover, convicted out of his own mouth of duplicity, of wilfully deceiving the House of Commons by stating what he knew to be untrue. But the policy of the Liberal party at that time required that Mr. Parnell should be whitewashed, just as it has since required that he should be blackened. Each operation was performed with equal thoroughness and equal lack of scruple. The iniquities of the Land League were condoned or condemned, according to political exigencies. So were the iniquities of the Divorce Court. Mr. Parnell's reputation in England became the plaything of party. The whole history—the inside history—of the proceedings before the Special Commission will never be known, nor the full extent

of the debt of Mr. Parnell to Mr. George Lewis. That debt was not Mr. Parnell's only, for at that time he was identified with the Gladstonian party, and it is not too much to say that the fortunes of that singular coalition depended on Mr. Lewis's professional skill. He pulled that case out of the fire. He it was who detected Pigott as the forger, he who put together that most remarkable fabric of proof which Sir Charles Russell handled in court with skill not less remarkable. He it was who dealt with the whole case, and who turned what seemed certain disaster into something like triumph.

There is, I believe, an explanation of the stubbornness with which *The Times* refused to make the apology which most people thought Mr. Parnell entitled to on the Pigott count. There is, at any rate, a story which may now be told, coming as it does from a very different quarter. The Pigott letters were beyond all question forged. It was, however, believed by some who had good means of knowing the facts, that Mr. Parnell was less innocent than he seemed. He did write, they say, a letter not unlike the forged letter in extenuation of the Phoenix Park crime. That letter was at the time in existence. Pigott went to America in search of it. He could not find it, or could not lay hold of it, but he learned the contents of it in substance, and when he came back fabricated a letter as nearly like it as he could. I am far from vouching for the truth of this too plausible tale, but I think there was a time when it was deemed true in *The Times* office.

The history of the Divorce Court proceedings must, like that of the Special Commission, remain to some extent a mystery. On one point, however, Mr. Parnell's fame may be cleared. He never told Mr. Davitt, or



Mr. Gladstone, or any go-between who sought his confidence, that he was innocent. What he did say was that he should come out all right. And that he believed. There were others who believed it, for various reasons, good or bad. It is probable enough that if Mr. Parnell had left himself in Mr. Lewis's hands he would have been cleared. But Mrs. O'Shea intervened. This lady preferred that there should be a divorce. Her ascendancy over Mr. Parnell was, as it had long been, complete, and she prevailed. Mr. Parnell took himself and his defence elsewhere, and finally, as all the world knows, declined to appear.

His relations with Mrs. O'Shea had, of course, long been notorious. They were known to everybody who knew anything about him. They were beyond doubt known for years to those Liberal leaders who afterward renounced and deserted him because, as they said, of his adultery. It was not the adultery which shocked the moral consciousness of these sensitive natures; it was the legal proof of it in open court which roused them to the enormity of the offence committed by the leader to whom they had surrendered. Nay, it was not even that; it was the revolt of the Nonconformist conscience. I speak of the Nonconformist conscience now, as ever, with respect. If one cannot always think its judgments enlightened, its sincerity is beyond dispute, and sincerity in public life is admirable in proportion to its rarity. It was the conviction, the reluctant conviction, of Mr. Gladstone that he must choose between Mr. Parnell and the great body of his Nonconformist supporters. It was the reports of the agents of Mr. Schnadhorst from all over the country, and from constituencies of every shade, that the Dissenters of England would make Mr. Parnell's retirement the

absolute condition of their continued allegiance to Mr. Gladstone. Those are the true reasons for Mr. Gladstone's letter to Mr. Morley, and the interval between the dates of the decree of divorce and the appearance of Mr. Gladstone's ultimatum cannot be filled up in any other way.

What happened on the other side of the Irish Channel proves that more sinister influences there got the upper hand. The priests saw their chance. There had been a long struggle between them and Mr. Parnell, and he had come off victor in every important contest. He had forced the priests and the whole Episcopal hierarchy to be his obedient servants. He had taken Ireland—political Ireland—out of the hands of Rome. But Rome has a long memory and a long arm, and knows how to bide her time. She had beaten Prince Bismarck; she was not likely to give in to Mr. Parnell. Her hour came when the decree was pronounced in the Divorce Court. She struck remorselessly, and the blow was fatal. She deposed the Uncrowned King, and she resumed that political control which she has never admitted and never will admit to be separable from her spiritual ascendancy.

Then was to be seen the most astonishing spectacle of modern times, a close political co-operation between the Romish priesthood in Ireland and the Puritans of England. It is unavowed, but it is none the less real, and at the head of it stands the one Englishman to whom Popery and Dissent are alike most hateful. Never was there a more appalling instance of the lengths to which political ambition will lead a scrupulously conscientious soul.

Ireland, or part of that part of Ireland over which the Uncrowned King once bore sway, will give him a

public funeral, hallow his memory, and build up the usual myths and legends about their dead hero's name. Yet the very effort to do this proves how critical the situation is, and how absurd it is to say that Mr. Parnell's death can have no political effect. The colleagues who betrayed him would fain join in honouring his memory, and dare not. Their appearance would provoke a riot. Mr. Parnell's grave would be the scene of a hand-to-hand conflict. They have prudently and wisely elected to stay away. Mr. Parnell, deserted by the great body of his countrymen, for whom he had done so much, deserted and ostracised by the English Liberals under Mr. Gladstone's imperious lead, remained a formidable force; and Parnellism may still be a force.

It is idle to predict the course of Irish politics, or of English either, for they turn on the Irish. Mr. Gladstone may regard Mr. Parnell's death as a direct Providential interposition in his own behalf. It may prove so, or it may prove the contrary. But the chances are that the Irish party, as always before Mr. Parnell's time, will again split into factions, dissolve before the temptations of office, and become again the tool of English politicians. Mr. Parnell kept it perfectly independent, and used it to one single end. It is not merely that the only leader is gone. The one man is gone who knew the whole Irish question. The others know bits and pieces of it. Mr. Parnell was a master of business, a master of details as well as of general policy. He knew the historical, the political, the economical, and the social sides of the Irish question, all of them, and all of them thoroughly.

To talk of replacing him by any of his subordinates is to give up half the battle. Mr. Dillon, perhaps the best of them, perhaps the most honest, is a creature of

impulse and rashness. Mr. O'Brien is an hysterical egotist. Mr. Healy, with all his lawyer-like cleverness and knowledge of Parliamentary forms, and sharpness of mind, is absolutely unfitted to lead a party. Mr. M'Carthy is a man of letters, honourable, honest, able for many kinds of good work, and totally unfit for the responsibilities he nominally bears. Mr. Sexton is a fluent speaker, but volubility is the cheapest of Irish talents. Who else is there? The mantle of Mr. Parnell is not to be divided, or if it is, the future of Irish politics and of Home Rule can never be what he would have made it. His life and work became at the end a wreck. He went to his grave in gloom. He might have recovered his hold on Ireland, or might not; but to say that any other, or any group of others, can take his place and play his part, is to say that a committee of third-rate incapables can do the work of a great leader who, whatever his faults, had at least as much political genius as any man of his time.

## THE SEVENTH DUKE OF DEVONSHIRE

[LONDON, DECEMBER 1891]

IF the life of the late Duke of Devonshire had no other lesson, it would have this: that a public man may be useful to his country as well by holding aloof from politics as by devoting himself directly to the service of the State. Never has the Duke taken much share in the business of political life, but never has there been a period in his long career when he was not remarkable for public spirit, and for the wise conduct of great affairs. Notoriety counts for so much in these days that it can do no harm if we remind ourselves at intervals—the intervals are apt to be long—that the private station also is a post of honour.

Yet it is in truth hardly possible to speak of the station of a Duke of Devonshire as private. There are Dukes and Dukes. This was the greatest of all. We may think what we like of titles and of rank, but we must take things as they are. No judgment formed otherwise than with strict reference to the facts as they are is worth a straw. The facts are that in this country title and rank still confer many advantages. Perhaps in no class are they more generally respected than in those classes where they do not exist; and by none more than by those who in public decry them. There is

but a single sphere in life in which they impose, or may impose, a serious disability on their possessor, and that is in politics.

Lord Rosebery, whose ambition is boundless, has been deploring in his *Pitt* the grim humour of the English constitution which exiles a Peer from the House of Commons, the governing body of the country. We shall see presently what the effect of this grim humour is in Lord Hartington's case. But the late Duke is an instance in the opposite direction; one that even Lord Rosebery might profitably consider. The Duke had abilities which would have given him a great place in public life had he thought that his duty required him to take up that burden. None was more sagacious, none had a sounder judgment of affairs and of men. Orator he was not, but oratory is not, in the last resort, the gift most essential to the government of a kingdom. There have been orators who were statesmen; and many more statesmen, including nearly all the greatest, who were not orators. Not always has the world held that the conduct of public affairs from the platform, even though it be the platform of a railway station, is the best conduct. The power of making the worse appear the better reason may bring him who possesses it to great place, and the State to its lowest ebb of fortune.

I will quote what I have heard indirectly—and only because I heard it indirectly—Lord Hartington's tribute to his father. Lord Hartington said he had never known any other man whose judgment on great matters was so sure, or whose counsel in a difficult political crisis was so weighty. He added that for whatever he himself had done in public life he owed more to his father than to all other influences put together. I can only give that

as hearsay, but I believe it represents what Lord Hartington said and thought. It is a testimony which cannot be rated too high. The relations between these two men, father and son, are known to have been of the closest. The Duke's affectionate pride in his son's success was not less because he himself had followed a different path. I suppose the most democratic of us may admit that even a Duke is human, and that like the Jew he hath senses, affections, passions. In the latter years of his life calamities had come to him: a son had been murdered by the assassins of Phoenix Park; another dying only last year who had been in many things as a staff to his old age. Lord Hartington alone was left: he and one daughter. Nobody, says a friend to the family, would doubt how much he was to his father who had seen the father's face light up when the son came into the room, or had heard him break through his reserve to speak of his son.

Pathetic indeed in latter years—pathetic and sympathetic—was the figure of the Duke as he sat at the head of the long table in the great dining-room at Chatsworth. His grave, strong face, the crown of white hair which fell carelessly over the high, broad forehead, the eyes alive and alight with a fire that seemed still young, the dignity, the beautiful, quiet distinction of manner, the stamp of intellect on the features, the bearing which had all the courtesy of an earlier century and was not the less stately for the bent head and the slight stoop—all these traits gave to him the air of one of the portraits by Titian or Van Dyck which hung hard by. He was as alert in mind as ever, his faculties clear, his judgment firm and sober and sound. His simplicity was that of the *grand seigneur*, and so was

his genuineness ; never in his life had he felt called upon to seem to be something he was not.

It need not be supposed that any dislike to new ideas or hostility to the modern spirit withdrew the Duke of Devonshire from politics. Twice he proved the contrary, and each time on one of the greatest questions which have divided this kingdom. He was Member for the University of Cambridge, one of the most conservative of constituencies, from 1829 to 1831, and his speech for the Reform Bill cost him his seat. In 1869 he—a great Irish landlord, one of those monsters of whom Mr. Davitt would sweep away every trace from Ireland and elsewhere—spoke in the House of Lords for the disestablishment of the Irish Church. He was a Whig in the best sense : a member of a great family which for generations had been Whig when to be a Whig was to be everything that was most liberal in English politics.

The liberalism of the Cavendishes goes back at least to the sixteenth century : a respectable antiquity in itself. The liberalism of that period meant liberalism in religious matters, and the chief founder of the fortunes of the family was that William Cavendish who was one of Henry the Eighth's commissioners for receiving the surrender of religious houses. Like the Russells, the Cavendishes received not only surrenders but lands. The Earl of Devonshire, who afterward became the first Duke, was a well-known opponent of the Court after the Restoration ; a staunch Protestant when Romanism had become the fashion and the road to favour ; a friend of Lord William Russell, for whom he had the courage to appear as a witness at that sad trial ; a prime mover in the Revolution of 1688, one of the seven signers of the paper inviting the Prince of



Orange over from Holland, and the first nobleman who appeared in arms on his landing. King William rewarded him handsomely in 1694 with the Marquisate of Hartington, and the Dukedom of Devonshire. On the same day the head of the Russells became Duke of Bedford, which gave rise to a long unsettled dispute which Duke was entitled to precedence over the other. It was a question which patent first passed the seal, and was decided in favour of the Duke of Devonshire. Even to this day it was still sometimes asked which of the great noblemen who bore these titles has the right to walk in to dinner before the other. There have been many Cavendishes since the first Duke ; never one who attached himself to the party of reaction. He who is just dead at eighty-three was the seventh Duke of Devonshire.

What withdrew the late Duke from politics was, in addition to his evident dislike of the coarser forms of that party struggle which, in this country, seldom knows a truce, the care of his great estates. The care of landed property in this kingdom has always meant, and still means, something more than the receipt of rent. The great landlord is a kind of small Providence to his tenants : for good or for ill. What the Duke of Devonshire was, one of his chief political opponents shall say : 'The management of his English property was a model to every landlord ; the management of his Irish property extorted the admiration of the Land League.' I suppose even Mr. Davitt, or that decayed oracle Mr. Henry George, would admit that if there could be a good landlord the Duke of Devonshire was one.

I believe it is true that he has spent on his Irish estates more than he has ever received in the shape of

rent; and spent it for the benefit of the tenants. At Lismore and in Derbyshire, in Westmorland and in Yorkshire, in Lancashire and in Sussex, and wherever else these vast properties lay, he was beloved by his tenants. In all the grumblings of farmers and the manifold grievances of tenants of every kind, none ever was heard of against this greatest landlord of all. He owned more than 200,000 acres; not one of them, oddly enough, in the county from which he took his title. More than a quarter lay in Ireland. But he was not content to conserve; he created. Most men would have thought that the responsibilities of so great a territory were heavy enough. But he moved with the time. He put a million sterling into the mines, the shipbuilding yards, the docks, railways, ironworks, and other varied industries, which in twenty years raised the population of Barrow-in-Furness from 300 to 20,000, and in twenty more to over 50,000. He created Eastbourne, a name which once denoted a little village or two, now a fashionable watering-place of some 40,000 inhabitants.

All his life long, from the time when he was Wrangler at Cambridge, the bent of his mind was to exact and applied science. He gave great sums to Owens College in Manchester. He founded the Cavendish Laboratory at Cambridge, and by his personal influence, by addresses, by service on Royal Commissions, and in many other ways promoted the teaching of physical science. In that also he was modern, but not narrow. He was not only a student of mathematics and of other science; he was one of the first classical scholars in the University of Cambridge, of which he became and remained Chancellor for forty years. An open-minded man in all things, with perhaps as many widely varying in-

terests in life as any one of his time ; from youth to age doing good to other men, and doing it so quietly that, notwithstanding his rank, his wealth, his position, his innumerable relations with the busy world about him, his name was rather seldom in the newspapers. All things considered, that is a eulogy on which it might be difficult to improve.

## MR. SPURGEON

[LONDON, FEBRUARY 1892]

### I

MR. SPURGEON'S death, and what has been said of him since his death, raise again the question whether the general opinion about a man be or be not truly expressed during his life. Honour is now done to his memory by those who did little honour to the man. He was regarded by large classes of people in England as a kind of show, something to be seen and heard because it was, in its own way, of a superior kind. The arriving stranger, especially the American, used to be told: 'Oh, you must be sure to hear Spurgeon,' just as he was told not to miss the Zoological Gardens or the Lyceum. The lions of Regent's Park and of Wellington Street and of the Tabernacle were all lions, and all worthy of a visit. Spurgeon was the Beecher of this country, said the travelled Englishman, who had strayed as far as Plymouth Church. The comparison is an obvious one, and it was commonly made by those to whom both were merely spectacles, or a kind of natural phenomena. It is not fair to Spurgeon to press the comparison, at least on the private side, since Spurgeon's private life was entirely free from scandal.

But hardly anywhere in the innumerable comments on the great English preacher who died on Sunday will

any reminiscence of this Barnum view be found, except in the news columns. The Barnum touch—I am reluctant to say it, and I mean to anger nobody—comes out in the unlucky telegrams which announced his death. Outside the Tabernacle in London were posted up printed copies of this despatch: ‘Our beloved pastor entered heaven 11.5 Sunday night. Harrald.’ And on the door of the Mentone Hotel, where he was staying, appeared a placard: ‘Mr. Spurgeon fell asleep in Jesus at 11.5 P.M.’; which is in a more extravagant taste than the other. The effect in both cases is grotesque because of the incongruity. The mixture of Biblical imagery with the arithmetical notation of a railway time-table disturbs the mind, and so does the title ‘Mr.’ applied as it is to the Christian departing in the ecstasy of hope in his Redeemer. The world might also have been spared the testimony of one of the news agencies that ‘all persons staying at the hotel speak in eulogistic terms of his manners and disposition.’ Some of the papers have good sense and good feeling enough to suppress these impertinences, but they seem to have been borne on the wings of the wind to the uttermost parts of the earth.

In those journals which are known as dissenting organs, nothing but panegyric was to be expected. Spurgeon was, as the great journal which is before all things a Church of England organ says, the best-known and most popular Nonconformist minister of the day. As such the Nonconformists do him homage. It is sincere, it is honourable to them and to him, but it is not particularly profitable to the inquirer who cares to make out what manner of man he was. An estimate must be discriminating if it is to be helpful; it must be, in the right sense of the word, critical. I hope it

may be said without offence that the attitude of the Nonconformist mind with reference to Nonconformist things or persons is not primarily a critical attitude. Like all other sects, the English Dissenters give up to sect something of what was meant for mankind. They glorify the great Nonconformist preacher because he was a great Nonconformist preacher. We all sympathise with their loyalty to their leader, and respect them and him the more for it. None the less are we obliged to turn elsewhere for an accurate account of the man.

Yet when we turn elsewhere we are still confronted with the language of eulogy; less indiscriminate, with less of that rash use of the superlative which is the most ineffective of all methods of eulogy, but penetrated with both admiration and sympathy; neither of them stinted or grudging. Spurgeon was thought in life to have ruffled the taste of the fastidious, and not of the fastidious only. He outraged the religious sensibilities of many excellent people, one used to hear; he was a rock of offence to Churchmen. Well, Churchmen in this country—the word means, of course, members of the Church of England—have always, consciously or unconsciously, held themselves above those who are not Churchmen. Their collective attitude is that of the superior person, and that is naturally disagreeable to the inferior person, or to the person who knows that he is thought to be inferior. The Church of England all over England is the Church of good society. If you wish not merely to be saved, but to be saved in good company, it is the Church, and not the Chapel, you will select as a means of grace. Whether one be more efficacious than the other from a doctrinal or religious point of view may be disputed. We do not know so accurately

as might be wished about the next world, but it is pretty generally assumed that in the next world an introduction from either will ensure the new-comer a good reception. In this world, or in that small insular part of it which lies between the Atlantic and the North German oceans, the social ascendancy of the Church is conceded. It is conceded reluctantly and resentfully by those who are not of it, but it is conceded.

On Spurgeon, therefore, rained down during most of his long ministry the kind of critical comment which the superior person or sect commonly bestows on him whom he thinks inferior. I used sometimes to wonder whether, had the preacher of the Tabernacle been a clergyman of the Church, we should have heard so much about his vulgarity, his irreverence, his coarseness, and other sins against the proprieties. There is no use in wondering. It is impossible to conceive of Spurgeon in a surplice, or as anything but what he was, a free and independent minister of what he believed to be true religion. He had a mission. He was tremendously in earnest. He believed himself sent into this world to save the souls of his fellow-men from damnation, in which also he believed; and he did not care how he saved them so long as they were saved. Out of these convictions and impulses came his strength and also his weakness. He would do anything to get hold of his audience; tell a story, or crack a joke, or use the homeliest illustration, or treat the God whom he worshipped with what others sometimes thought blasphemous familiarity.

He shocked some of his hearers and many more who were not his hearers. Legends and myths formed about him as they did about Beecher. The story that Beecher began one of his discourses with the words 'It

is damned hot,' is paralleled by the story of Spurgeon's choosing for text to a funeral sermon on one of his deacons: 'And the beggar died.' Neither was true; both were widely believed. Spurgeon's sliding down the rail of his pulpit stairs was another of these inventions, and there were people—there always are—who would tell you they had seen him do it, and probably supposed they had. Upon the strength of such fictitious anecdotes, and of others which were not fictitious, the general Church opinion of Spurgeon was formed.

It gave him, I imagine, little or no concern. The public to whom he appealed was not an ecclesiastical public; not the aristocracy, not society. He appealed to the people, and, among the people, chiefly to the middle classes. He was of them and with them all his life long. He understood them and they him. It was they who, Sunday after Sunday for so many years, thronged the great Tabernacle across the river. He and they were the spiritual heirs of the same Puritanism which we in America think of as part of the freight of the *Mayflower*, and have kept as the faith of our forefathers. Spurgeon cared little for the niceties of theological formulas, but to the main points of his creed he clung with all the energy of his nature. He used to say he was fortunate in having begun his ministry with little education. In no sense was he a scholar; of divinity he knew almost nothing, of patristic learning, or church history, or doctrinal instruction, he had hardly a smattering. It was the absence of all these that constituted his equipment. He cared only to preach Christ and him crucified. The Bible held all the theology he wanted, and of the Bible itself he had no critical knowledge. He knew nothing and cared nothing about the results of modern linguistic and



historical and palæontological inquiry into the authenticity of the Scriptures, or about the genuineness of particular books, or parts of books, or the inroads which science has made upon the Mosaic cosmogony. To him the Bible was the Bible. Half the secret of his strength was in the limitation of his knowledge. He was disturbed by no doubt; what he believed he believed. For a man whose aim is to make others believe, no endowment is comparable to this power of faith.

## II

In the present position of the religious world in England, Mr. Spurgeon was invaluable to the Nonconformist body, among whom he was the foremost man. His loss is to them irreparable. He leaves no successor; men of genius seldom do, and Spurgeon's claim to genius of a certain kind cannot well be denied. What the mass of people care most for in a cause is the man behind it, and Spurgeon was the man. He was the incarnation of English Nonconformity. In the struggle and conflict of sects, a leader is a host in himself. Spurgeon's leadership was of the kind which in these days is most effective; perhaps in all ages of religious history has been most effective. Whatever else he was ignorant of, he understood human nature; or, to put it more truly, he understood men and women.

His was a commanding personality, to begin with; he would have been a power if he had been dumb. He impressed himself, not only on the six or seven thousand people who came every Sunday to the Tabernacle, but on those who did not come. No doubt, the circulation of his printed sermons had something to do with this, but the man had much more. The personal legend is

more than the printed word. I will venture on an illustration not meant to be irreverent, but chosen only because it is the most forcible. What is Christianity to all Christendom? Is it not Christ? The Jew whom Pilate crucified has given his name to the religion he taught, and left behind him not so much a body of doctrine as a new ethical statement of the rule of life. People read the Gospels and the rest of the New Testament. But when they close the book and go about their business, it is the individual Christ who goes with them, and the story of his life which affects their lives, if anything affects them. Or I will put it in another way. Take Christ out of the New Testament and what is left? Much that is admirable; nothing that would have revolutionised a world. Of course, I don't suggest any parallel, not even the most remote, between the two men, Christ and Spurgeon, except that they were both men.

Spurgeon had no creative genius; he has contributed nothing to religion or to ethics, nothing doctrinal or vital or formative. Creeds and dogmas are what they were before his voice was heard. But he has contributed Spurgeon, and it will be many a generation before the echo of those tones which filled the Tabernacle Sunday after Sunday has ceased to vibrate in men's memories. He was something more than a bulwark to his own church; he was a beacon light which shone from afar. We in America do not forget that he was of the faith and of the church widest spread in our country. We have no Nonconformity, happily, because we have no conformity; no State Church to provoke Dissent, and therefore no Dissent. But the great Nonconformist none the less belongs to us. If we could not all go to the Tabernacle we read him and read about him. We

bought his sermons in print. They had, it is said, a greater circulation in the United States than in England; naturally, since the number of readers is so much greater. Whether we stole the Gospel according to Spurgeon, or paid for it, I don't know. Perhaps we did both. There used to be, nay, there still are, people in America who hold that because literature is a profitable thing for the people, the people ought to have a legal right to purloin it from its owners. The argument, if it can be called an argument, is just so much better for religion as religion is better than mere literature.

Spurgeon's eloquence has been a good deal discussed; it was this and that or the other thing; or none of them, according to the judgment of the critic. But the first thing, and also the last, to be said about it is that it did its work. Eloquence in the strict sense it may not have been; eloquence in the highest sense it certainly was not. But to Spurgeon, speech was an instrument for the conversion of souls, or for stimulating religious enthusiasm. He wanted to attract great companies of people to what he called the house of God, to hear what he believed to be the word of God; and when they were there to fix their attention and hold it, and to plant in their minds something that would stick there, take root, perhaps, and spring up and bring forth first blossom and then fruit; but at any rate something they could not forget.

To this end nothing came amiss to him; or almost nothing. He had the first requisite for public speaking, a voice of great volume and compass, capable of infinite modulation. He had a diction which was almost too copious. The two books out of which it came were Shakespeare and the Bible. He read his Shakespeare, and perhaps knew it, as Bright knew Milton. They

were the two books—the Bible and Shakespeare—out of which, as you will remember, Kossuth taught himself English in an Austrian gaol. If a man has mastered either—but the Bible for choice—he has little need for anything more. I mean, of course, the real Bible, King James's Bible, the Authorised Version, and not that miserable thing called the Revised Version; out of which, however, a man may well learn How English Ought Not to be Written; or how the noblest monument of English literature may be defaced and degraded by revisers who thought much of the Hebrew and Greek sense, and very little of its right expression in English, and not at all of the reverence due to the text in which the genius of the English language is immortalised.

Spurgeon was no rhetorician, no master of style. His printed sermons will not for a moment bear comparison with Newman's or Liddon's. It is not quite a fair test. A sermon in print is a dead thing. But it is fair to Spurgeon because of the immense and amazing number of readers he secured for a kind of prose most of which is, by general consent, more wearisome to the flesh than any other. Probably the secret in his case is the vitality of the man; his force, his earnestness, his energy, his enthusiasm, unquenchable even in print. Some of the blood which ran in his veins in a full tide overflowed into the printed, cold book. Something of the man is there. But in the pulpit, or rather on the platform, since the pulpit he abhorred, the whole man was there. It was not merely a voice, not an orator, not a minister of religion merely or mainly, but a man. It was with Spurgeon, as Pascal says of the writer: 'You expected to find a book; you are astonished and enchanted to find a man.' So, whether

it be as orator or as divine or as the leader of a great ecclesiastical party, we come back to the same point ; here was a man.

On the purely human side there was a great deal that was admirable in Spurgeon ; his charity before all things. His creed was not charitable in a broad sense ; there was too much damnation in it, but the man was broader than his creed ; no uncommon thing, happily. To take only the coarser form of charity, I suppose nobody was ever more open-handed about money. He gave out of all proportion to his means ; in his mind, or rather in his heart, means signified something to give away. He fulfilled the maxim which Mr. Carnegie has preached and may yet practise, that it is the duty of a rich man to die poor. The Tabernacle gave him, or might have given him, a great income. Whatever it was he seems to have spent it on others. He was offered \$1000 a night in gold to lecture in America. He said he knew nothing about lecturing, he could only preach, and if he went to America to preach he would not take money for it.

He knew the value of money as well as anybody, and when he had to manage it for others, managed it with marked ability. His orphanages were always said to be models of business order. His accounts were accurate and would bear auditing. Nobody ever challenged him in vain to submit them to strict professional inquiry ; a challenge which has been addressed to Mr. General Booth without result. I imagine that the leader of the Salvation Army was of real service to Spurgeon. He was a service because he was a warning. For that or some other good reason the great preacher's coarseness grew in latter years less coarse. He quietly dropped some of his faults of

manner ; age had softened him and power brought with it moderation.

Another side of his character comes out in his answer to the lecture somebody read him about smoking. He said he smoked to the glory of God ; and that shocked some most worthy people. He explained—he need not have explained—that, according to Scripture, a man could glorify God in eating and drinking, and so might he in smoking. Scripture, of course, closed the mouths of the worthy objectors. It is permissible to be racy if you put your raciness in a Biblical garb. He could use the pen otherwise than in composing sermons. He wrote much in the journal he called *The Sword and Trowel* ; pithily and to the point. Sometimes he reminds one of Cobbett ; a writer who had more in him than ever came out. Spurgeon had shrewdness and sense and worldly wisdom,—more than all, he had a perfect reliance on himself and a perfect independence of mind. He was never ‘deaconed.’ The Tabernacle was his ; if it had ceased to be his, he would have created another the Sunday after he left the first. He taught good lessons to his people, but the best lesson of all was his life and his character.

## TENNYSON

[LONDON, OCTOBER 1892]

### I

A WORD of explanation is due to readers of these belated notes. On the day after Tennyson's death I sent you two letters which I hear have been lost. To rewrite them, as you wish, is not easy. Weeks have gone by. The atmosphere is no longer the same. The first feelings and impulses of the public have faded out. The poet has been buried; the world has gone about its usual business. The freshness of the general sympathy has grown, not perhaps stale, but less fresh. There were a few days during which everybody talked about him. If he is mentioned now, he is mentioned as Wordsworth might be. He has become a classic: his place is in the past. It is hardly possible to return after an interval to the mood in which a public loss leaves one. The sense of the loss may be just as keen; one's admiration for the man or for the poet is no less. But a writer who wishes to convey to distant readers the impression made on his mind by the spectacle of a great people bowed by a great grief must do it at once or not at all. Anything one can put on paper now must be inadequate. There are, however, many things one would like to say, even if one cannot resay the particular thing first said.

What was most striking at first was the outburst of affection for Tennyson which seemed almost universal. The expression of it in public was remarkable: in private it was more remarkable still. It was most remarkable of all because it was not, and could not have been to any great extent, personal. Few men who have filled so great a space in the intellectual life of their time have dwelt so much alone. He was almost a recluse. He did not care much for society, nor society very much for him. He seldom or never allowed himself to be lionised. He had, at times, a house in London, in 'that long, unlovely street,' which bears Harley's name, and there Lady Tennyson sometimes entertained. But he formed no regular part of the social existence which so often has so much influence on fame and on popularity. He was a frequenter of no club. He never entered the House of Lords for the business of legislation. He was never seen at Newmarket, which is not only the Turf headquarters, but a great social centre. He did not go to private views, nor to first nights, nor to Court, except privately; and never, or hardly ever, was a figure in any of the great public functions which are so many stages on which many a practised performer exhibits himself to the gaze of the public. I do not think he ever attended a Lord Mayor's dinner, or ever anywhere made a public speech.

He chose to live at Freshwater or at Aldworth; places not inaccessible, certainly, but remote indeed from 'streaming London's central roar.' There he exercised a certain hospitality, in a fashion of his own. He received his own friends; rarely his friends' friends. There or elsewhere he led a self-centred life. Friends he had, of course; not very many, but deeply attached to him, and in no English household were family ties



closer than his ; in none the domestic life more beautiful. He could draw out deep feelings of attachment in other men even more self-centred than himself. Carlyle had almost an affection for him : and there were others, though none so remarkable as that grim, dour Scotch peasant who dwelt apart in Chelsea and forged thunderbolts for the world. In short, it is to be said of Tennyson that if he was loved, he was loved deeply ; in his own phrase, he was to each friend all in all or nothing at all. They who mourned for him most bitterly were they who knew him well, or who knew him never.

People had a certain idea of his personality ; of his appearance ; of his masculine force of character ; of his remoteness from other men ; of his curt manner, and, on occasion, roughness of speech or total silence ; of his impatience ; of many other traits, attractive or otherwise, all merging into a real grandeur of nature ; an individuality that was impressive if not always attaching. But so far as he was really known, he was known by his poems. Out of the thirty-five millions of his fellow-countrymen, not more than a few thousands ever saw him or spoke to him. They knew what manner of man he was outwardly by innumerable photographs. He was as frequent in the shop windows as a professional beauty. They knew, perhaps, Millais's portrait of him ; a fine picture, but too theatrical in pose and treatment ; such a Tennyson as he might have looked on the other side of the footlights whither as author, not actor, an unfulfilled ambition led him, all in vain. And yet there was, beyond all question, on the morrow of his death a most general and genuine sorrow throughout the land. It must have been the poet whom these millions regretted, yet the poems were not dead ; only

the man; and the sorrow which fell upon England is a testimony to the unselfishness of human nature and to the sympathies which are, after all, eternal in the human breast.

The causes of all this are well worth considering and getting at, if one could, but among them all there is, it seems to me, one conspicuously false and one conspicuously true. The false one is the religious. An effort is made to represent Tennyson as a great religious teacher, and a great part of the homage offered him is set down to the religious sentiment which pervades this people. There is but very slight foundation for that notion. One writer tries to draw a contrast between Tennyson and Renan; all to the disadvantage of the latter, of course, since it is the orthodox view which this singular theorist presents to his readers. Tennyson, he says, lifts us into another world. 'If he had not Renan's learning, he had a range of thought far wider and covering a very different field.' And he proceeds to allege, in his authoritative way and from a position of great authority, that Tennyson had, almost from his first appearance, a powerful influence in forming the minds and in directing the thoughts of his kind—meaning the religious thoughts—and 'never wasted his efforts in the wilderness of barren criticism.'

Not by such eccentricities as this is Tennyson's fame to be advanced, or the source of the love men bore him to be discovered. He was no ecclesiastic and no theologian. He was not, in any right sense of the words, a religious teacher. He had—not perhaps from the beginning but during all his mature life—a profoundly religious soul, but nowhere in his writings is there any considerable body of evidence tending to show that he looked upon himself as sent into this world

with a divine mission. There is little or nothing in his poetry that is apostolic. What he valued in religion was not dogma, but the spirit. Like Newman, he had doubted, and like Newman's, his settled faith was, in a measure, an act of will. It is the religious fervour and the passion of immortality which breathes through 'In Memoriam,' to which the notion of Tennyson's missionary influence is mostly traceable. If Arthur Hallam had not died, on what would the conception of Tennyson as a religious teacher rest? Like Wordsworth he

By the vision splendid  
Is on his way attended.

But neither of these two great poets—and Tennyson far less than Wordsworth, who affirmed that he came as a teacher—thought it needful to preach poetry from a pulpit, or put religion into a metrical form.

The true note in Tennyson, that which, apart from his poetic genius, endeared him to his countrymen, was the note of heroic patriotism. What the English felt as they heard of his passing, was that a great Englishman was gone. From his earliest to his latest breath he sang the love of country. This seagirt isle, with its imperial dependencies, was to him the world. Whatever was heroic he valued; whatever was both heroic and English he loved. If there was anything he despised and detested it was the modern notion which would make England into a Holland, reduce the Empire to a parish, and put trade before the flag. He was an Englishman of Elizabeth's days. The spirit of Grenville and of Raleigh was his; of Howard and of Drake. If it burned in any breast of his own days, so much the better. Gordon was to him as much a hero and martyr as Cranmer was. What he hated was the inane

internationalism which has striven, and striven vainly, to supplant in English hearts the love of this English land. He hated the peace-at-any-price people. Aldworth was distant from Manchester by millions of miles. The pure air which the poet breathed on the fir-clad slopes of his Sussex home had nothing in common with the poisoned vapours on which the men of the Manchester school nourished their blood. The Manchester school has died out, leaving as its spawn what is called the New Radicalism. For that also, and for the men, or most of them, who preach and practise it, Tennyson had a healthy and manly scorn. That, too, will die out.

I do not believe that the love of country, or the love of fighting for the sake of country, has ever gone out of the heart of this English race, but if it had Tennyson would have rekindled the fire. No such appeal had for long been heard in England as that summons to arms which put life into the volunteer movement, and gave England another army. 'Balaclava,' 'Lucknow,' the 'Ballad of the Revenge,' and many another, ring with the clash of steel. Emerson well said that the 'Ode on the Death of the Duke of Wellington' was a more magnificent monument than any or all of the histories of the Duke's life. There is not a line of it which is not aflame with patriotism. His admiration for Gordon, and his righteous anger against the abandonment of that noble soul to his martyrdom in the Soudan, are of the same fibre. That, and not merely his melody, nor in any degree his religious rhapsodies, is why the great Poet, like the great Duke, is buried 'with an Empire's lamentation,' buried 'to the noise of the mourning of a mighty nation.'

The attempts to assign to Tennyson a definite and

permanent position as poet are numerous. Whether any of them is completely successful is another matter. The ambition to anticipate the verdict of posterity is a natural one, perhaps laudable, but is not free from peril to him who indulges it. Posterity is apt to pay little heed to these predictions. Browning used to say that he regarded foreign opinion as a kind of contemporaneous posterity. This might seem to point to America, and in a letter written some time before this—the third or fourth of this short series—I spoke of Mr. Stedman's criticism on Tennyson as one of the fullest and most adequate of all. But Browning would not admit that America came within the category of foreign countries. If we keep to English estimates it is to be said that, while the hand of the Philistine is visible in many, some of them are delicate and true, as far as they go, if not complete. To sum them up within the limits of a concluding paragraph is impossible, and it is now, perhaps, rather late to attempt it in a newspaper.

Many of Tennyson's qualities and gifts were such as nobody could miss, and every writer offers you a catalogue of them. There are but two points on which I wish to say a word, and Browning's name suggests the first. There never were, that I heard of, any Tennyson Societies, as there were Browning Societies, and the reason is plain. The Laureate wrote so as to be understood of the people, and not to require, as Browning certainly did, even during his lifetime, an army of commentators and expositors. His lucid simplicity was as admirable as it was characteristic. He had no theory of poetry which was compatible with obscurity, or with rough workmanship. He left the grotesque on one side. He chiselled and finished;

sometimes, no doubt, over-anxiously, for the changes in the later editions are seldom for the better. But he was true to his convictions. That he had something in common with Browning may be admitted, but it was touching the substance of things unseen; not at all as to the method of poetic workmanship, or the true definition of poetry.

The two men were friends, but I doubt whether Tennyson ever quite understood the growth of the fame which came so late in Browning's life, or what element of popularity there was in him. They were both deeply concerned with some of the deepest problems of human nature; that was the real bond of intellectual and spiritual sympathy between them. It may be imagined that the discussion of their own work was not usual with them. Browning, indeed, had many friends who cared for him, and cared not for his poetry. He had the magnanimity to disregard his friends' blindness or indifference to the work of his life. He would meet people day after day, on intimate terms socially, and exchange views with them freely on all or most other subjects, and never seem to remember that they had nothing to say to him of the one theme he cared for most—his own poetry. Such, I conceive, were the relations in which he stood to Tennyson, except that his intimacy with Tennyson was not very close.

The other point is this: Tennyson was in literature the supreme artist of his time and of his own country. No Englishman of his day has so perfectly understood the use of words. When all else is said, when inspiration, poetic genius, melody, rhythmical variety, his mastery over metres, and all his other gifts are allowed for in estimating the effect and influence of his writing,

the final analysis comes back to this point: It is above all things a work of art, and the supreme art is in the choice and use of words. The best words in the best order—that is poetry, said Coleridge. Yet Tennyson is of a country which cares little for art and knows less, whether it be of canvas, or of the printed page, or of marble, or whatever else. Hence, it is, I suppose, that so little is said of Tennyson's art; so little acknowledgment made of the place it holds in his poetry. The English concern themselves with results; seldom with processes. They are content to perceive that a poem or a picture is beautiful; not asking why it is beautiful. That is why so much of the English criticism, full as it is of appreciation, is so imperfect, and why it gives you no full account of the matter, and no disclosure of the secret on which the poet's fame may ultimately rest.

For style, which Tennyson had in the highest sense, is of no time and of all time. The taste in poetry may change, and does change, but a master of English remains a master. He had it in prose also, though little of his prose has become public except letters. It has been said of Byron, with no true discernment, that his letters are finer than his poems. Nobody would now say it of Tennyson, nor can any prose writer be put by his side. Not Carlyle, who was a great writer if not a great writer of English, and who had, even in prose, that quality of picturesqueness, or of presenting pictures to the eye or to the mind, which is itself a poetic quality. Not Ruskin, who has himself said that no page of his is worth a line of Tennyson's; an acknowledgment as true as it is generous. Not Mr. Froude, perfect as his writing is in its own kind; since perfect prose is a thing entirely different from perfect poetry. Not Matthew Arnold, though his best prose and his

best poetry are each as fine as the best of any other of his own time, and though, as man of letters, he must, by virtue of the scope and play of his genius, stand ever in the front rank. And if not any one of these, who else can be named ?

Tennyson's art has something of a subtler and purer and more divine nature than any of these. Like Wordsworth, though in a less degree, he has written too much, and like Wordsworth, as he takes his march down the ages, time will sift and winnow his work. Some of it must be left behind, but, if any critical opinion is permanent, and if the future of English literature is to have any convictions and canons in common with the present, and with three centuries that have gone before, the best of Tennyson must be immortal.

## II

The anecdotes of Tennyson of which this letter will be made up are all, so far as I know, unpublished. It is easy to say they were new when first written out some weeks ago ; less easy to be sure now that none of them has got into print ; but I will, at any rate, use none that I have seen. I string them together without trying to classify them, or to moralise on them over-much.

Among the men whom Tennyson knew best and liked best was Lord Houghton, the Milnes and the Dicky Milnes of some of the letters, and of all his early life. Houghton, with all his worldliness, had a real affection for his friends, and perhaps for none more than for the brother-poet who so completely outshone him that the title of brother-poet seems misplaced, if not ludicrous.



But did not Sir Edwin Arnold claim Matthew Arnold as a namesake and brother? Houghton, moreover, liked chaff, and liked to amuse himself at his friend's expense. Tennyson, perhaps, did not like it, but defended himself in his own way. This oddly-assorted pair, on a certain evening now many years ago, were dining together at the house of a common friend, and Houghton betook himself to his favourite amusement. He sat directly opposite Tennyson, and the moment either of them spoke to the other everybody else became silent. 'Tennyson,' said Houghton in his easy way, for no Englishman was ever lighter in hand, 'I have got a number of your earliest unpublished poems in your own handwriting, and as soon as you are dead I shall print them.' Tennyson stared grimly at his tormentor, and, after a pause which fixed everybody's attention, answered: 'You beast.' It was said half humorously, half angrily, but it silenced Houghton as if it had been a blow.

If the threat had any serious meaning in it, fate ordained that it should never be fulfilled. Houghton, born in the same *annus mirabilis* of 1809, which produced Tennyson and Mr. Gladstone and our dear Oliver Wendell Holmes, died seven years before his friend. Nor need any one imagine Houghton capable of a disloyal act. He was not.

Little as Tennyson cared for society, he was sometimes to be met in houses which interested him, and one of these was the Duchess of Bedford's, in Eaton Square, now the Dowager Duchess. It was at a party there one evening that he saw a certain great lady, of whom he had heard, but whom he did not know. He desired to be introduced to her, or, perhaps—for his ways were sometimes regal—desired that she might be presented

to him. In whichever way it was, the ceremony was transacted, and Tennyson's second remark was this question: 'O Lady —, do I know Lord —?' The person about whom he thus inquired was a Peer who, though young, had won much distinction in public life, and was widely known in private. His wife, as it happened, was devoted to him, and jealous of any word which sounded like disparagement of his position or indifference to his renown. She looked Tennyson in the face and answered, with perfect composure of manner: 'I am sure, Lord Tennyson, I can't say. I never heard him mention your name in my life.' For a moment the poet was staggered by this straight hit from the shoulder, but he had the good sense and good temper to take it well. He liked to be met on even terms, and liked a man, or a woman either, who would face him in his most arrogant moods. They became friends and parted friends, with the expression of a wish on Tennyson's part that the husband would come and see him; which I rather think he never did.

Tennyson's dislike to intrusions upon his solitude showed itself at times in an entire disregard of conventionalities. He allowed himself to indulge in what, in anybody else, would be called downright rudeness. One of his neighbours, with whom he was on good terms, once asked leave to bring to Aldworth a lady who was visiting him—a lady well known in society, as her husband is well known in a world much wider than society. She had, it was carefully explained, a great desire to see the poet, for whose writings her admiration was great. Tennyson assented with amiability, telling his friend to bring her to luncheon on a day named in the following week. When they arrived the poet had forgotten all about it, and, by ill-luck, was in

one of his solitary moods. The lady was introduced, the poet bowed. Luncheon was announced and they went in ; she sat next her host, who uttered not a word during the meal ; at the end of which he rose and retired in silence to his own room. She left the house, to which she had made this pilgrimage in a spirit of hope and of reverence, not having once heard so much as the sound of the poet's voice.

It would be a mistake, however, to suppose that Aldworth or Freshwater was a hermit's cave, or that hospitality was unknown to the poet. There were certain friends whom he liked to have with him ; sometimes old, sometimes new. It was one of the latter who paid him a visit, no great number of years ago, at a kind of crisis in his poetic life, when 'The Cup' had been, or was about to be, produced at the Lyceum Theatre. Dinner over, the butler, having filled this guest's glass, placed the decanter of port before his master. The talk was on a subject which deeply interested Tennyson ; none other, I imagine, than the production of this same play from which the poet fondly and vainly hoped his fame as a dramatic writer was to take its rise.

As he talked he drank, and, not noticing his friend's empty glass, filled his own till the decanter was drained. Then he said : ' That was a very good bottle of port, don't you think ? Shall we have another ? ' And the guest assenting, the butler brought in a second decanter which went through just the same experience as the first ; Mr. — having one glass from the butler, and Tennyson, entirely engrossed in talk as before, consuming all the rest. Early next morning his guest awoke to find Tennyson standing by his bed, and regarding him with a sort of friendly solicitude.

‘How are you this morning?’ was the host’s query.

‘All right, thanks.’

‘Sure you are all right?’

‘Quite sure.’

‘Ah, but pray, Mr. —, do you *always* drink two bottles of port after dinner?’

Tennyson, like Browning, preferred port to all other wines. It is a taste they shared with other great men; with Mr. Gladstone and Lord Eldon, and many more. Lord Eldon notoriously liked bad port; the sort of black-strap of which Dr. Johnson’s friend observed, in answer to another’s complaint: ‘It is thick and it is black, and it makes you drunk; what more can you want?’ Tennyson’s preferences ran in the same direction I have heard. He liked what the publican calls ‘fruity’ port, which is the horror of the true port-wine drinker. However, there is a story which, in some slight degree, tends to confute this calumny—I hope it is a calumny. His friends used to send him anything particularly good which came in their way. One of them, an eminent man of science, once despatched to him a small parcel of the vintage of ’47. When next they met the poet remarked: ‘That port of yours was filthy stuff; it was all muddy.’ The eminent man of science mildly suggested that he had, perhaps, not given it time enough to rest after its journey. ‘Rest? There wasn’t enough of it to put away. You only sent me half-a-dozen.’

If there be connoisseurs of port in America, where port used not to be in fashion, they may like to hear the opinion of the man of science on the question how long port ought to be kept after travelling before it is ready to drink. ‘There is not,’ he declared, ‘in any bottle of port of any vintage any crust or sediment

which will not, a half hour after the bottle be placed on end, so completely sink to the bottom as to be invisible.' But that, though the judgment of science, is not one in which the hardened connoisseur can be expected to concur.

We need not take part in the criticisms upon Tennyson's liking for solitude. If any man is entitled to judge for himself how much he will see of other men, surely the poet is. He can be a poet only on his own conditions, and knows in what circumstances he can think and write, and in what others he cannot. Nor, I may add, has the notion that the private life of a public man is public property ever got a solid foothold in this country. The interviewer exists in England, but he has not yet become an integral part of the social fabric. The better journals will have little or nothing to do with him. The tourist and the sightseer have, no doubt, pretty free ways. They used to dog the poet's footsteps and to enter, or try to enter, where the interviewer would not, knowing he had no chance. There was an awkward paragraph in *The Times* about their nationality. Referring to the pertinacity of excursionists bent on a glimpse of Tennyson that journal says :

'Prominent among these during the summer months, when the poet made Aldworth his home, were Americans, some of whom have been known to make a fortnight's sojourn in the neighbourhood with the sole object of seeing him.'

That is not agreeable reading for us, nor do I think it fair to impute this sort of morbid curiosity to Americans especially. The English tourist, from 'Arry upward, is apt to take large views of his privileges. The American is much less intrusive, and at least as

likely as his English cousin to think himself in need of credentials ; which, indeed, a particular class of travellers consider ought to be forthcoming when asked for, whether from friend or stranger. It takes time for the arriving American of this class to grasp the fact that letters of introduction are here given sparingly. The rule is never to give such a letter unless the giver has some claim upon him to whom the introduction is sought.

I knew a case not long since which may serve as a specimen. A man of some distinction in his profession called upon one of his countrymen in London. He said : ' I know you are busy and I will take none of your time, nor ask you any favour which will give you trouble. All I want is letters to Salisbury, Gladstone, and Tennyson.' It was useless to try to persuade him that it was impossible to give such letters. He departed convinced that his friend was not disposed to oblige him.

If the letter to Tennyson had been written it would not have served his purpose ; nor to the others. Things are not here done in that way. But I suppose no day passes when the American Minister is not pestered with similar demands. Tennyson protected himself as best he might against these, as against other hero-worshippers ; and was able to live his own life when once he had established a reputation for moroseness. It was his fixed resolve that he would not suffer his life to be frittered away in mere civilities.

Tennyson's impatience of criticism lasted long after his immense success might have made him indifferent to individual censures. He never overcame his dislike to it ; if it never shook his belief in himself and his work, it annoyed him. He was content with nothing short of universal approbation. When occasion offered

he took an odd revenge on those who presumed to judge him. A writer of the critical kind once assured him that he could always tell what lines wrote themselves from pure inspiration, and what others had been laboured. In response to Tennyson's invitation he quoted a famous verse as an instance of poetic spontaneity. 'Ah, yes,' drawled the poet, 'I smoked a dozen pipes over that line.'

It was not difficult to induce Tennyson to read his own poems to a select circle. The poem he preferred was 'Maud,' or perhaps he only preferred it for reading aloud. It was, at any rate, the one he most often chose when asked to recite. He read with enthusiasm. Whether the poems really gained much from the author's delivery of them is an open question. His voice was deep rather than musical, and his elocution peculiar to himself. Still, these audiences were always interesting, and one of them was more interesting than all the others.

Tennyson was one of the party invited some years since by Sir Donald Currie on a yachting trip: the yacht provided being an ocean steamer of the South Africa line, known as the 'Pembroke Castle.' Mr. Gladstone was another guest, I think—certainly he was on one of the two or three trips then taken. There was on board a young English girl, since married and dead, whose beauty and intelligence and charm were all remarkable. Tennyson attached himself to this brilliant and sympathetic creature. He was often asked to read, and it became his habit to read holding her hand, which, in the fervour of recitation, he often pressed.

The ship put in at Copenhagen and the Princess of Wales and the Empress of Russia, then on a visit to

her old home, came on board. There was luncheon, and after luncheon Tennyson was asked to read, and did, sitting between the Empress on one side and the English girl on the other. When it was over and they had gone up on deck, he asked the girl whether she thought the Empress liked it.

‘Well,’ answered she, ‘her Majesty must have thought it a little unusual.’

‘What do you mean?’

‘I mean that I don’t think the Empress is in the habit of having her hand squeezed in public even by poets.’

It seemed proper to Tennyson to offer to the Empress his most humble apologies for his mistake. The Empress laughed and told him she had enjoyed the reading extremely.

Of Tennyson, as of Victor Hugo, it has been said that he avenged the author upon the publisher. Both were good men of business, with an adequate sense of the money value of their writings, and both were capable of driving a bargain. I don’t know that Tennyson has ever had the credit, as Hugo had, of ruining his publishers. It was, I believe, true that the tremendous prices Hugo was in a position to obtain brought one, or more than one, of these gentlemen to bankruptcy. It is certainly true that, after his fame was established, Tennyson was able to exact large sums, and that, either because the terms were more profitable on one side than on the other, or for some other good reason, he changed his publishers pretty often. In other words, they did not care to renew their contracts with him.

But for many years past Tennyson’s London publishers have been Messrs. Macmillan, an eminent firm,



who are believed to adjust their relations with authors on strict business principles. I am only repeating the gossip of the trade when I say they were understood to pay the poet a very large sum yearly for the right of printing and selling such of his poems as were already in print. When a new poem came out, a new bargain was made for that particular transaction. I think it honourable, both to the poet and the publisher, that the relations between them should have existed so long, and on a basis of mutual good-will as well as of business. So close were these relations that, upon the author's death, it was the publishers to whom the arrangements of the funeral, so far as they concerned the public, were confided. Mr. Craik, one of the partners in the firm, had, I think, the practical conduct of the whole business, and had to grant or refuse admission to the abbey—no easy task when you consider that the applications exceeded 10,000 for less than 2000 places.

The talk about the absence of the Prince of Wales from Tennyson's funeral soon died away. Few of the English papers joined in it, nor did the one which started it persevere. I think I said at the time that it was doubtful whether etiquette or some rule of court did not prevent his attendance. On inquiry I am told that is so. No member of the royal family is expected to be present at the funeral of any subject, unless of one of the royal household; in that case it becomes optional. 'If,' said my informant—a person who understands these high matters—'the rule were once to be relaxed, it would be impossible to draw a line. If the Prince of Wales had gone to Tennyson's funeral, how could he have stayed away from half a dozen others which may be expected to occur during his lifetime?'

This argument does not seem very conclusive, but I give it as it was given to me.

Perhaps, since even kings and princes are human, the Queen or her son may consider that the margin between royalty and the subject is already narrow enough, and that it is not expedient to reduce it in any way. More probably, the Prince lacked a sufficiently powerful motive to create a precedent or take a new departure. And, as I said before, no comment would have been made on his absence had not some too zealous Gladstonian thought it desirable to divert criticism from his chief. Mr. Gladstone's absence had a reason, and a good reason, but the reason publicly assigned was a bad one; hence the censure which fell upon him. Even that he has survived, and about him, too, or about his conduct in this particular, the talk has come to an end.

Some of the stories I have given you may seem to some of Tennyson's American admirers lacking in reverence for the great master who is gone. I do not think so. They are, at any rate, not told in a spirit of irreverence, nor of antipathy. They are told because they are illustrative; they show, each one of them, a side of his character or some trait which helps explain the man. There are points in which one would have liked Tennyson to be other than he was; so are there in all men. But we cannot make him over, or make anybody over. We have to make the best of him, and to be thankful for him, and to draw such best lesson as we can from his life and character. Let the fierce light beat upon him as upon the throne; few men can better endure to be known fully. The spirit in which a great memory is to be approached is, I grant, a spirit of reverence, but it is also, and above all things, to be a spirit of sincerity and of complete truthfulness.

## THE GERMAN EMPEROR

[BERLIN, MAY 1893]

Nor the least remarkable thing about Berlin is the Tempelhof Parade Ground. Here are 3000 acres of land set apart, since 1721, for purely military purposes—it is a parade ground and nothing more—now just upon the edge of one of the newest and most rapidly growing parts of the town, where land is worth so much per square foot for building purposes. The speculative builder has, in this case, to give way to the practical soldier, and the German taxpayer, one of the most heavily burdened mortals now extant, sees himself obliged to provide a space on which two respectable armies may manœuvre, and sometimes do. We were too soon for the great Spring Review, which occurs near the end of May, but you can never in Berlin be too soon or too late for a military spectacle of some kind.

We had a spectacle from our windows opening on the Wilhelms Platz every morning, if we chose to get up to look at it, at six o'clock. The garrison of Berlin is a restless body, and some part of it for ever in movement—infantry, cavalry, and perhaps artillery most frequently of all. Lest we might miss it, or lest the good Berliners should forget they are in a state of semi-siege, or lest they should sleep too late, the troops have bands with them at this early hour, and magnificent bands they are. No better, if so good, martial music

anywhere now to be heard. So we did not mind being waked up, any more than the little world of foreigners at Homburg last year minded. There, also, at six o'clock or earlier, troops were under arms and bands playing. It did not signify whether you minded or not. The convenience of the military, not of the civilian, and least of all the foreigner, is considered first of all in Germany and most of all in Berlin. Later in the day are to be seen the regiments coming back from their morning's work at Tempelhof; the Emperor at their head perhaps. And there is no hour in the day when you may not see some sort of a military procession; all in the way of business, and as part of the regular operations of the army in time of peace.

The Emperor's appearance on these and other occasions still excites curiosity and interest. Nobody is visible so often in the streets of Berlin. People stop to look at him, and some of them take off their hats. There are no cheers. He is greeted with civility; of enthusiasm there is none. He is not popular, and he is not trusted. 'Nobody knows what he will do next,' observed one of his subjects, by way of summing up the general feeling toward him, and the general anxiety.

The Emperor, as all the world knows, takes himself very seriously in all his imperial capacities, and in none more than as a soldier. He lives at Potsdam in the New Palace. He is in the saddle every morning at six, rides in to Berlin, sixteen miles, and out to Tempelhof which he reaches at eight, when a review begins lasting till one o'clock or later. At two he goes to lunch, or perhaps it is dinner; is, at any rate, a solid mid-day meal. After these seven or eight hours on horseback and of hard work drilling and manœuvring, and after his solid two o'clock meal, the ruler of Germany thinks

himself in proper condition to attend to affairs of State. He attends to them or not, as he sees fit. The business of State which has to wait for His Imperial Majesty's attention is, for the most part, very much in arrears. He is not a good man of business and not methodical.

The State, in fact, or the Empire, seems to be to the Emperor a kind of diversion from the serious business of his life. The serious business is the Army. That is one view. On the other hand, there are Germans who will tell you that the Army is the Emperor's toy. It really does amuse him to devote five or six hours a day to the duties of a drill-sergeant. Drill, manoeuvres, dress, the least details of military life afford him an infinite delight. Did he not the other day issue another of those military encyclicals for which he is famous? These solemn documents bear on various subjects relating to the business of soldiering—sometimes duel-fighting, sometimes beer-drinking; both which pastimes His Imperial Majesty encourages; by precept, if not by example. This time the exhortation of the Hohenzollern monarch related to the wearing of pointed shoes and of high collars; both of which His Imperial Majesty strongly disapproves and discourages.

We were told we ought to see one of these morning drills at the Tempelhof, and we did. To witness the great Spring Review is the privilege of a few. You may not happen to be in Berlin at the right time, and, if you are, it is a matter of high diplomacy to get permission for a carriage to go on the ground; the best or perhaps the only good way of seeing the performance. There is a tradition in Berlin that Mr. Phelps once drove out on one of these great occasions with a procession of seven carriages; each containing four or more of his countrymen and countrywomen; so that

some thirty Americans were privileged to look on while the German Army was inspected by the German Emperor; or so much of the German Army as constitutes the garrisons of Berlin and Potsdam. This was a distinct triumph for the United States. No Ambassador ever had more than four carriages; and no other Minister so many as four. It was one more proof of Mr. Phelps's talent for diplomacy; a talent which the diplomatist has so often to display, if he can, in little things as well as in great.

But on ordinary mornings anybody may venture, not on, but to the edge of the parade ground, and get a very good view of what is going on. E. and I drove out, not indeed at eight, but toward eleven; which was in good time for the manœuvres. The three hours' inspection and drill we were willing to take for granted. I dare say the soldiers would have been still more willing. 'They are worked to death,' was the remark of a military expert, 'and so are their officers.' It does not seem to occur to the imperial enthusiast who presides over their destinies that everybody may not have the same passion for playing at war which he has, nor the same degree of physical energy. There are, however, not a few Germans who fear lest the play be only a preparation for war in earnest. These daily drills and manœuvres are a new thing. It is a new thing for a German Emperor to inspect in person and command in person regiment after regiment, as if to assure himself that every part of that immense military machine which goes by the name of the German Army is in perfect order and ready for immediate use. Does he mean it for immediate use?

That is the question which men are anxiously asking themselves, and sometimes each other. The Emperor's

ambition is without bounds. His confidence in his own military capacity has no known limits. His technical knowledge is large. He certainly does understand his trade as a soldier, and would, in the opinion of competent judges, be an excellent commanding officer of a regiment, probably a good general of brigade ; perhaps a sufficient general of division. Will any competent judge go further than that ? Can it be said of any officer till he has been tried in actual war that he is fit to command a corps d'armée ? Can it be known whether he could handle an army on a field of battle ? Napoleon, it is true, had never commanded more than a few battalions when he planned and executed that wonderful first Italian campaign which he never surpassed. But is it absolutely certain that the Emperor William Second is a Napoleon ? Is he even a Frederick ? He may be both, but how is one to know ? The number of generals who have proved themselves fit for war on a great scale is not large. It is never large.

The Emperor's talents seem to be talents for detail. He does not take broad views in politics. He might not take broad views in war. It makes one think of Moltke's remark that he was not quite sure he could set a squadron in the field. That the Emperor can is beyond dispute. That he can also conduct a campaign is his own conviction ; which not all those about him share. Hence the apprehensions at which I hinted above. The Emperor longs for all kinds of fame, and for military fame most of all. He is thought, rightly or wrongly, capable of plunging two nations into war in order that he may win this military fame. No doubt he would do it conscientiously—that is where the danger lies. He can always persuade himself that he has a divine command.

The old Emperor was content to leave the conduct of military operations in the hands of the Staff, of which Moltke was simply Chief. It is not believed that this young Emperor will do so, and if he did there is no longer a Moltke. The new Chief of Staff was chosen by Moltke, but if the Emperor prefers to be his own Chief of Staff, as General Grant sometimes did, who or what can prevent him? No man can say whither the spirit of adventure, coupled as it is with no misgivings as to his ability to play any part, may lead him. The Emperor of Russia excepted, no man living wields such power as this precocious Hohenzollern. The Emperor of Russia, however, is amenable to advice. The German Emperor notoriously is not, whether in lesser or greater affairs. He will not hearken to the experienced officers who hint to him that he is overdoing it with his soldiers; that mere human flesh and blood, with no divine right or Hohenzollern lineage to fall back on, are not equal to the task he sets and the work he exacts.

One result of this procedure struck me as ominous. The two o'clock dinner lasts, for the officers, the greater part of the afternoon; is sometimes not over till six or seven in the evening, said a friend who knows the army and its ways. Men who have been on parade and much hustled about from eight in the morning till past one become hungry and thirsty. The dinner is a copious one, and the drinking heavy, both during and after dinner. And what do you suppose is the fashionable beverage of the smart German officer of the Guards to-day? Champagne and port, mixed. It makes one think with a shudder of the absinthe which softened the French brain under the Empire which collapsed in 1870.



These gloomy forebodings seem, I admit, out of place in the Tempelhof, and in the sunshine which bathes the broad plain and flashes back from steel and from gold epaulettes and from a thousand polished surfaces. The parade-ground is cut in two by a public road, along which the public is allowed to drive, taking its chance of being swept away in a charge of cavalry. There are carriages and cabs, and either side of the road is lined thinly with spectators. You come upon the scene as suddenly as if a curtain had gone up, for you pass in a moment out from among the streets of Berlin into the country, and on each hand the smooth expanse of the Tempelhof stretches before you. It is an almost level plain, dipping here and there into slight hollows, and rising on the left into a hill. Nearer, on the same side, is a wood.

There were, as far as one could judge, two regiments of infantry, nearly all on the right of the road, as we drove up; there was a body of cavalry on the crest of the hill, and, as presently became evident, a force in the wood. Mounted police kept the line; troops excepted, nobody allowed on any part of the ground. To the left, between the woods and the road, was a group of horsemen, and in the centre of the group the Emperor. He had about him a staff that might suffice for the commander of an army on a real field of battle; plumed generals and scores of gilt officers of various grades; the military members of various embassies and legations in Berlin completing the company, while mounted orderlies hung on the outskirts and at every moment galloped off with messages for the forces engaged. The mimicry of war was perfect. The Emperor was but dimly visible from where we were, and if, in our eagerness to behold or even to identify the Imperial

face and figure, we ventured a foot upon the turf, a mounted policeman rose out of the earth to warn us back, with equal firmness and civility; for never once did I hear in Berlin, or elsewhere in Germany, a rude or harsh word from these panoplied guardians of the public peace. 'Would you have the kindness to keep in line with the others—I am obliged to ask you;' such was the address of this gallant officer mounted on a gallant grey, who rode slowly up and down the front of the spectators.

However, we knew the Emperor was there and could imagine the features we had seen before—the hard face with its self-contained and self-satisfied look, the eyes too near together, the expression of unrest, the air of irrepressible vigour, which makes him seem always to be wanting to do something else; the critical gaze fixed on his troops which forgets to note no fault, no mistake, no speck on any button, no wavering in the line which ought to be drawn across the field as with a pencil and a ruler on a sheet of paper. I imagine there is not much fault to be found, yet they say His Majesty never omits to summon about him after a review the colonels and field officers of the regiments, and general if there be one, and read them one and all a lecture on the art of war and on their shortcomings in the exercise of the morning. He is a terror to his own soldiers, whatever he may prove to be to the foe.

In the next hour we saw a battle; acted from beginning to end with a sense of reality and seriousness which the theatre never gives you and no written account can express. If it was not on a great scale, it was perfect in each particular and a spectacle of extreme beauty. Seldom is it in actual war that any one beholder or actor can grasp the whole scene, but here the whole was

as plainly visible as if in truth it were a performance on a stage. They were no puppets nor marionettes, but real men; no amateurs either, or militia or mere show troops, which one often has to call the English; but an integral portion of the most tremendous military force in the world, with the prestige of victory on its banners. Under the scrutiny of those piercing Imperial eyes, no man dared do his duty less seriously than if the contest were real. It was real to him; to the officers above all. Everything was transacted with the utmost energy and precision of which the trained German soldier is capable.

The business they were set to do presently became plain even to the eye of the civilian. The wood on the left was held by a defending force; invisible to us or to the attacking troops. The battalions massed on the far side of the road were to carry it if they could. It was beautiful to see them set out upon this little campaign. The compact masses of soldiery slowly shook themselves into open order. The squares and columns formed into line; duly distributed into advance guard, main body, and reserves. A company of skirmishers broke suddenly loose from the front, scattered, ran forward, fired, and dropped on the ground. At first they attracted no attention from the enemy, who on his part kept fast to his wood half a mile away. They sprang up after a minute and ran forward again, followed at a distance by the advance guard whom in turn the main body followed; the reserves standing fast. When this movement was perceived from the wood, volleys broke forth, and the assailants dropped again, when they had delivered their volley in reply.

There was something uncanny and incomprehensible about the whole proceeding. From both wood and open field came crash after crash of musketry and no

smoke; they were firing with the new smokeless powder. It was quite evident at once that smokeless powder has its drawbacks as well as advantages. You see better, but you are also seen better. The attacking body on a ground which afforded no cover whatever was simply a target for the skilled riflemen in the woods—a target which spread over a great space, in a blaze of sunlight, in which glittered a thousand spikes on a thousand helmets, and every gilt button and steel scabbard and buckle and epaulette was a target by itself. The effect was as dazzling for us as it was dangerous to the troops themselves; the whole plain sparkled and gleamed and glowed with these innumerable points of reflected light. But skirmishers and their supports went steadily forward; the rush at the double quick was repeated as soon as the fire from the wood died away; and so many yards of ground gained and held at every rush. Presently the reserves also moved up. Almost at the same moment a body of cavalry flashed out of the wood, poured along the crest of the hill, and threatened the right flank of the advancing enemy. The right flank swung steadily round till it had ceased to be a flank and become a solid wall of armed men facing this new foe, into which it delivered a hail of blank cartridges that sent the cavalry headlong over the brow of the hill, dismounted the guns of the battery which the cavalry supported, and cleared that part of the ground altogether. Once the cavalry and guns reappeared, but their fate was the same. They could not live under that fire and had to vanish.

No more, I thought, could the infantry have lived long on that flat uncovered field, had there been bullets in the rifles from the wood. Next us stood a little cluster of military critics who commented freely, being

out of the Emperor's hearing, upon all these transactions. When finally the infantry advancing in line, reserves included and skirmishers still well in front, swept on to the edge of the wood and into it and the defenders fled in the wake of their cavalry and artillery, I asked one of these gentlemen, plainly an old soldier, if, over such ground as that, infantry could ever have got near the wood. 'Never,' was his answer. The strength of the fire had shown that the force in among the trees was considerable enough to have annihilated the regiments outside. But if you do not know the conditions under which an engagement of this sort takes place, criticism is thrown away, and we of course did not know them.

It was possible to occupy the mind with something beside tactics, to enjoy the brilliancy and animation of the scene, and to believe we had seen a battle in miniature; as we had. What is called a sham fight is often a meagre imitation of battle without interest or beauty or veri-similitude. This was so like the real thing as to make one remember the rather comprehensive remark of a soldier who is not German: 'There are no soldiers but the German.' Such remarks are not meant to be taken literally; they are only a form of the superlative, only a note of admiration. Whether the Germans are still the best troops in Europe is a point on which, with or without the Emperor's help, the world will presently have an opportunity of forming fresh opinions.

## THE BIRTHPLACE OF THE BISMARCKS

[BERLIN, MAY 1893]

THE road from Berlin to Friedrichsruh, whither we were bound on Wednesday, lies historically though not geographically through Schönhausen. This was the birthplace, and for a great part of his life the home, of Prince Bismarck; and to it he still returns often, though now as a visitor only. He gave it last year, or year before, to his eldest son, Count Herbert—not, as was afterward said, as a wedding gift, for the transfer was made before the wedding was thought of. Count Herbert was his son—that was enough, and if it were not enough the younger Bismarck had been for many years, and in different capacities, his father's right hand man, and such he remained while Minister of State for Foreign Affairs; perhaps more than ever. And it is at Schönhausen with his Austrian bride, who is half English also, that Count Bismarck now lives. Berlin sees no more of him than of his father, and the public service, which had no more capable servant among the men of his generation, sees nothing either. Since his father's disgrace Count Herbert has been, in the American phrase, out of politics; to the immeasurable surprise at first of the youthful Emperor, who thought he could turn off the father, with rather less

ceremony than an English gentleman would use to a domestic servant, and yet keep the son. But, in this as in some other matters, the Emperor found himself mistaken. Nothing even to this day occasions him so much astonishment as the consciousness of his own mistakes, or the fact that other people consider them mistakes. The frequency of them seems never to diminish his surprise.

The station of Schönhausen is two hours by rail from Berlin; the house which gives its name to the village—or borrows it, I know not which—is seven or eight minutes' drive from the lonely station. A straight sunny road between green fields leads to the village, where it turns and broadens into a street; on either side of which are a few red-roofed, sleepy-looking houses. The village lies, in memory of its feudal origin, as Petworth and many an English village does, just outside the gates of the house. Turning sharply out of the street, we pass on the left what may be either a lodge or a farmhouse, or both; a medley of buildings fills or encloses the space we are traversing; in a moment we are at the front door, and a huge Bavarian boarhound stalks up to the victoria and makes friendly advances to the two strangers before we have set foot on the doorstep.

If you will recall the beginning of Prince Bismarck's life as a Prussian squire of a superior kind, it will help you to form a notion of what Schönhausen is like. Not a castle, not a great house; a mansion built with simplicity of stone. The actual fabric, with its immensely thick walls, dates in great part from the end of the seventeenth century. Parts are much older. There has been a house or, in earlier times, a convent here for many centuries. Whenever the ground is disturbed,

bricks and other fragments of an ancient edifice come to light. The original date was about 1200. In the Thirty Years' War the whole was destroyed; then rebuilt in whole or in part, more than once. The old cellars still extend far underneath the terrace, and there used to be, perhaps still is, if one tried, a communication underground with the church.

The house and the estate came into the possession of the Bismarck family, much against their will, in 1560. The property they then owned attracted the attention of the Elector of that day and he coveted it, and since there was not then much other law than that of the strongest, and the Elector was strongest, the Bismarcks had to surrender their old home. They received in exchange Schönhausen, and have been here ever since. A good estate, not a great one. The house, of three stories, is without pretension outside or in; roomy, comfortable, encompassed and overshadowed by trees, and a room or two darkened by them, notably one in the right-hand corner, where the finest horse-chestnut in North Germany rises far above the roof, with two others hardly less fine. Trees, as I said, on all sides and much shrubbery, and it is not too easy without a guide to find one's way amid the many buildings for farm purposes, which show in what a practical spirit the estate has been managed.

An orchard of old apple and other fruit trees extends far on the right. A gate to the left leads to water, a marshy stream whence you may hear the croaking of frogs, and by the stream is a grey old moss-grown statue, peppered with bullets. The Prince used it in times past as a target, and was a good shot. The garden is large and rambling, and there are graves among the bushes, one of them that of an elder brother, with



an inscription setting forth that his early death was the only sorrow he ever caused his parents. It is a German feeling and a German custom, this burying of the dead near the family instead of at a distance and among strangers—as if they still belonged to the family. And do they not? The highroad divides the estate into two parts. Formerly it was all one; then was split between two brothers, one of whom parted with his share. The Germans handsomely bought it back and gave it to Prince Bismarck.

On a grassy space in the garden are a number of old cannon taken from the French at Strasburg and elsewhere; some very curious. Most curious of all are two of Louis xivth's time, covered once with fleurs-de-lys. The Republicans of '93, who cut off another Louis's head, could not tolerate the royal flower, and did their best to scrape them off; but only those on top. Underneath they are not touched. Such was the extent of this Vandal sincerity. Count Bismarck told us that these trophies were frequently visited by the butcher who comes to buy cattle off the farm; an old soldier, with a soldier's love for such relics of war and victory. To others also they are, if not exactly lovable, full of historic interest. We thought them, like the tapestry from the council chamber, a fitting gift from the old Emperor to his Chancellor. The two gifts together symbolise his public life.

A large square hall divides the house inside; drawing-room and dining-room on one hand, library and morning-room on the left; other rooms also. A staircase at the farther end leads to a similar upper hall, with, to the right, a large room, now the boudoir of Countess Bismarck, and next it the room where Otto von Bismarck-Schönhausen was born. Into this, though now private and furnished in a way which would certainly

have surprised young Otto, with a delicate feminine elegance which tells its own story, we were allowed to look. The sun was streaming in, yet there is a legend that a ghost walks here; history of this disembodied spirit, or any reason why it should still visit the place, unknown. But as one legend begets another, the last owner but one of Schönhausen is supposed to have seen, or if not seen, to have become aware of the presence of this restless spirit by some means more mysterious than mere human vision.

You may pass thence into a large room hung with embroidered silk tapestry. The same tapestry once covered the walls of the council chamber of the Palace in the Wilhelmstrasse, which was Prince Bismarck's residence from 1862 till 1878; and the Foreign Office also. Catherine of Russia sent it as a gift, originally, I forget to whom; and that was the use made of it. When Prince Bismarck moved into No. 77, next door in the same street, the old place was dismantled, in whole or in part, and the contents sold. The old Emperor bought this tapestry, and gave it to his Chancellor, saying to him, or writing to him: 'It has witnessed all your struggles and triumphs; it ought to be yours. Accept it from me.' So it was sent to Schönhausen, and there rested for many years, rolled up. Then it was hung about the room it now decorates; a beautiful thing in itself, said E., and its history more beautiful still.

As we arrived for luncheon the room we saw first was the dining-room; interesting from many associations, with an outlook upon the orchards, and interesting also from the wedding presents which covered sideboards and tables; some of them from England; an early English silver bowl of great size and beauty among them. After luncheon, coffee was served in the garden

under the trees, the great dog still keeping us company ; and then came the visit to the museum.

The museum is a Bismarck museum. Here is a large building of two stories, and in a dozen rooms are collected all kinds of mementos and offerings to the Prince. It is a veritable museum with many objects interesting in themselves, and all interesting for his sake. Some are now to be seen at Chicago, whither the German Commissioner has carried them, but the greater part of the collection is still here. In the entrance-hall are more French cannon ; these also are imperial presents ; among them some of those dreaded French mitrailleuses which, in 1870, were to sweep the German armies off the face of French earth ; but did not. Modern as they are, they are out of date ; no more mitrailleuses are made or used. The shot did not scatter. Seventeen shot in the shoulder of a single comrade of Count Bismarck at Mars-la-Tour ; more than were needed.

There are, all through the rooms, presents from all parts of the world, and from every kind of person. The Emperors' room is entered first. It is a collection of Emperors—of portraits given by the sitters—the Emperors William First and Second of Germany ; the late Emperor Frederick of Germany ; the Emperors of Austria and of Russia ; the King of Italy—all life-size, full-length, and, with perhaps one exception, of inconsiderable merit as works of art. Never, I suppose, had any subject such a collection of imperial mementos. The Queen of England, who is also, by grace of Lord Beaconsfield, Empress of a considerable part of the rest of the world—she is there also. In this or another room are the Pope with his bland face, and Cardinal Antonelli, very highly coloured. Uncoloured, and modestly hung in a corner, is a photograph of the size, I think,

known as imperial, of President Cleveland ; an offering volunteered by him during his first Presidency. Mr. Bayard is there also, and the Prince of Wales, though I do not know why I should bracket the late Secretary of State with the Heir to the British Throne, except that they are both, photographically speaking, of the same size.

Hard by is an offering from the United States, much more remarkable than any likeness of any living American ; nothing less than the desk on which Jefferson wrote the Declaration of Independence, or the first draft of it, with an inscription in rather faded ink testifying to the fact, on the authority, so far as I could make out, of a certain Mr. Coolidge. How came it here ? Why should a relic of the Revolution of the very highest interest and importance be in this museum at Schönhausen, rather than in Philadelphia or in Washington ? ‘Sent to my father as a gift by an American admirer,’ is Count Herbert’s explanation of the matter ; name of the giver apparently unknown ; at any rate not mentioned, and I did not like to pursue the inquiry. But the history of such an object must be known by somebody, and I dare say some good American will look into the question and let us know. Desk with every look of genuineness, of mahogany, some fifteen inches square, folding and unfolding, with what the cabinetmakers call a slope, and green baize lining ; just such a machine, said Mr. Phelps, to whom I described it, as they did use in those days. Whether we ought to go to war to recover it is a question for the American people.

There is a lesser copy of the large picture in the Old Palace at Berlin representing the proclamation of the Emperor at Versailles ; copy better than the original. Perhaps the most pathetic object in the museum is the

rush-bottomed chair on which Napoleon III. sat in the peasant's cottage at Donchery, after he had ridden out from Sedan in the early morning of September 3, to surrender himself and his army to the German Emperor. Prince Bismarck, as he said quaintly, sat there with him 'trying to amuse him,' while the staffs were discussing the terms of the capitulation. A fine bust of Moltke is not far off, by a sculptor whose name I ought to remember but do not; a man who understands his trade yet devoid of any love for the heroic or ideal, or for anything but the plain facts of the head and face. It was done very late in Moltke's life, and looks like a cast taken after death. Moltke did not like it. I thought I saw a faint resemblance to the cast of Lord Beaconsfield taken by Boehm, but that was probably fancy.

Of busts and statues and statuettes of Prince Bismarck there are scores, if not hundreds; mostly modelled, I judge, from photographs, or from a chance view of the man; hardly one of them very good, except the statuette by Schafer, of which the original, life-size or larger, is, I believe, at Cologne. This is the real Bismarck in figure and pose, and a good piece of sculptor's work. Many portraits of him also, Lenbach's the only very good one. You cannot easily count the number of books and albums containing addresses to the Chancellor of all dates, freedoms of cities and the like, and as many bouquets, or skeletons of bouquets, or ribbons with which they were tied, pendent from the walls. Far more personal and biographical than these are the fencing foils, and masks and duelling swords, used by Prince Bismarck at the university. Relics from other and more serious battlefields abound, from all, I think, where the Prince had been present, or in

the origin of which he had a share—that is, of all since he became Minister in 1862. There are many hundreds of volumes, all presents, and a thousand different gifts and different kinds of gifts, of which I cannot make even the briefest mention. They are from every quarter of the civilised globe, and from some uncivilised; a marvellously carved ivory tusk, for example, from the Emperor of China, and another, hardly less marvellous, from the King, or whatever he was, of Burmah. This museum is open to the public, and there are many visitors. You may study here many an episode of the Prince's career. The gifts continue to flow in. There is a visitors' book, a volume of some size, and among the names of those who have been to view the collection recently you may read in those large, heavy, firm letters which suggest so vividly the colossal personality of the writer, the name 'von Bismarck.' It occurs again in the visitors' book, kept in the house itself. He comes now as a guest only to the house of his fathers.

The church, standing inside the grounds and close to the house, is a plain fabric of red brick, with a huge, square red brick tower, nearly the size of the church itself, fortress like: the whole dating from the twelfth or thirteenth century. The interior was ravaged during the Thirty Years' War, and nothing escaped except a crucifix in wood, as old as the church itself, midway in the right aisle. The whitewasher, who has defaced so many monuments, has not spared this. There has been a question of cleaning off the whitewash, but there is risk in that and Herr Lenbach advised against it; so there it hangs, all deathly white, and some of the true character of it hidden beneath its present coating. But nothing can hide the simplicity of it, or the sincerity, or the pathos with which the subject has been treated.

There is no effort to express passion or agony ; nothing but the helplessness of actual death, and the divine patience with which the agony was endured.

In the central aisle are stone slabs, with worn and now all illegible inscriptions, the tombs of former Bismarcks. The mother of the Prince has a tablet to herself on the wall. Opposite, and high above the floor, is the family pew of the Bismarcks, of black oak, carved in a florid but good manner, of the last century. The pew has the look of a veranda, with roof, slender columns, open spaces and balcony ; the effect of it is fine and even stately, with the Bismarck arms boldly carved above. The whole interior, with its high altar and other features, looks more Catholic than Protestant, but Catholic it is not, and never was. The villagers of Schönhausen are a pious, church-going folk, and fill the church every Sunday, all dressed in deep black.

I leave Schönhausen with a deep impression, which only an actual visit to the place can convey. What one can describe is little. It is the breathing of the air, the actual sight of the birthplace and birthroom of Prince Bismarck, the living for a few hours something of the same life he and his ancestors here lived, amid scenes and sights and sounds familiar to him and to them—this and much else are what fix Schönhausen indelibly in the memory, and enlighten one's mind. E. and I both thought we understood him and German life the better for this experience ; and we felt and saw under what graceful and gracious modern influences the old life was assuming, in some respects, a new form. Schönhausen, at any rate, from which we part with grateful regret, is the true portal to Friedrichsruh.

## A VISIT TO PRINCE BISMARCK

[BERLIN, MAY 1893]

### I

WHEN the Emperor William First gave Friedrichsruh to Prince Bismarck, it certainly was not with any thought of the convenience of the German people. It cannot have occurred to him that they were concerned in the matter, or that a day would ever come when the Prince would be an exile from power, and when the nearness of Friedrichsruh to Hamburg might have a certain influence upon his relations to his fellow-subjects, and upon theirs to him. Yet so it is. The accessibility of the place encourages pilgrimages and visits. When Prince Bismarck goes to his other estate of Varzin in the far north-east of Prussia, a day's journey by rail from Berlin, the pilgrimages and visits become much less frequent. Now events have taken such a turn that Prince Bismarck's communications with the world he used to govern have come to depend on this rather casual intercourse; except, indeed, when he has occasion to journey through the land. Then we see the journey become a kind of progress; last year's the most remarkable of all. But when residing at Friedrichsruh he receives many visits and some visitors, many deputations from far and near: students, societies, schools, statesmen, individuals. And these are the occasions on which he is likely to say something, so that Friedrichsruh has become a kind of platform from which



its owner addresses his fellow-countrymen and the rest of mankind. Never, as I said, could it have entered into the head of his old comrade and Emperor that a use of this kind would be found for his imperial gift.

The station of Friedrichsruh is but forty minutes by rail from Hamburg, and the house not more than two minutes' drive from the station. The train passes within a hundred yards of the entrance, and you get your first view of the mansion from the window of the railway carriage. The expresses between Berlin and Hamburg roar past many times a day. The house has neither that seclusion which the Englishman thinks the first condition of agreeable country life, nor that stateliness or splendour which one might expect in an Emperor's gift to his great Chancellor, a gift in acknowledgment of the Empire which the servant had bestowed on his sovereign. But the Germans have their own views in these as in other matters, which sooner or later they contrive generally to justify to the world. In 1871 the house, or so much of it as then existed, was, or had been, a kind of inn, or boarding-house; of brick faced with pale yellow stucco; the window-frames and doors of a brighter brown-yellow; no architecture to speak of. It has since been doubled or trebled in size, and has become a spacious, comfortable mansion, quite devoid of external decorative features. But it has angles and gables, with a balcony or two, a broad terrace, and the trees dignify the edifice, the shadows softening the hard outlines, and on the side away from the entrance the charm of the place first becomes evident. A few steps have carried you far away from the glare and noise and from the world, and you find yourself in a forest.

It was, in fact, not the house but the estate which

must be considered the Emperor's offering; an estate of 30,000 acres all in timber. There is no cultivated land. The village of Friedrichsruh was built by a certain count who owned a small shooting lodge there. When Prince Bismarck first came, the house was so far from being tenantable that he stayed at the lodge of the forest-keeper, beyond the stream which divides the house from the greater part of the wood. There it was that he first made acquaintance with his new property, which he, with his love of nature and of country life, and perhaps of trees above all, perceived at once to be a noble domain.

But that is an impression which, to the visitor, comes later. As we drove from the station along the sandy road parallel with the railway, it was the house and not much else that we became aware of; trees about it on three sides evidently, but the house standing out and standing so near the road that you pull up at the front door almost as soon as you have passed the gate. We were met at the door by Prince Bismarck's secretary, Dr. Chrysander. It sounds like the name of an ancient Greek, but he is neither Greek nor ancient—an accomplished young German, with a knowledge of English and an amiability of character by which we profited in many ways.

We were to have arrived for luncheon at half-past twelve, but were late, and the family had already gone in, and we were asked to follow at once. There was time to be aware that we stood in an entrance-hall of some size, decorated in a light varnished wood, with two long stands for coats, on one of which hung a large, full, blue military coat, with red facings and broad fur collar. Easy to imagine what figure it had enveloped. Thence through a morning-room to the right, furnished,

like all the rooms we saw, with simplicity ; thence into the dining-room, where, at the further end of the long dining-table, sat Prince Bismarck. The room some thirty feet by twenty, with grey painted walls, crowded with pictures ; windows looking on the terrace or balcony, and the trees looking in. Here it was that one first felt as if the outer world had been left behind, for from these windows only woods and meadow and stream were visible ; the meadow an amphitheatre rising beyond the water and enclosed by the not distant forest, with which here you become at once on intimate terms. The furniture of the room not remarkable, except the high, straight-backed, deep, capacious armchair, covered with smooth black or perhaps very dark green leather, in which the Prince sat. Princess Bismarck's place was not opposite, but at the side next the windows near the other end ; on the other side the Countess von Rantzau, their daughter, whose husband is German Minister at The Hague ; and there were two other ladies.

The Prince and Princess rose and came forward to welcome us. The Princess being nearest the entrance I spoke first to her, and introduced E. Strict German etiquette would have required, I believe, that we should have presented ourselves first to the master of the house, but the German, strict himself and strict with his own people, is tolerant to the foreigner. The greetings on either side passed very much as they might in England or America. Not quite so when we sat down. Places had been left on either side of Prince Bismarck for both of us ; as if in recognition of the interest which to us, as to the rest of the world, centred in him. The Princess took her former seat at the side near the upper—or was it the lower ?—end.

I own myself embarrassed, or at any rate much per-

plexed, as I set down these particulars and think of others which are to come, and of my position as the narrator of them. The reader may also be perplexed, and in his interest and mine, perhaps I had better say what had happened. I had been asked to Friedrichsruh before now, but had not gone. When this visit was arranged, I said I would either put the journalist wholly aside or, if Prince Bismarck saw fit, it might be understood that I should use my own discretion, and either say nothing or say what I thought best. It was left in that way. Certainly I did not go to Friedrichsruh to 'interview' Prince Bismarck, nor did I interview him, nor could I interrogate him, nor shall I repeat much of what he said. If I describe, even in the briefest way, the interior of a private house, and even the inhabitants of it, it is because Prince Bismarck is indisputably the first public man of his time and belongs to history;—even to some slight extent to that contemporary history which is called journalism; and the world does, I suppose, care to see as much of him as it can, and likes a glimpse of his home and home life, and he is not unwilling to allow it. The frame as well as the portrait is interesting.

The world, of course, would like to have some things it ought not to have and cannot have. There are limits which I hope not to overpass. If I do, or if I convey a wrong impression of him or of his opinions or feelings on any point, the responsibility is mine. I am availing myself of a permission of which the obligations are the more imperative because it was freely given.

I had last seen Prince Bismarck in 1888, in the Reichstag; and on various occasions before that; notably one evening in his palace in the Wilhelmstrasse—the old one—of which I have many memories. But

never till now had I seen him except in uniform, whether in public or private, in Parliament or in the street, or as a figure in a military parade. I don't know that he ever appeared or spoke, whether in the Prussian Diet or in the Reichstag, otherwise than in a soldier's dress. Soldier he has always been, and still is, and nothing seems to be dearer to him than the military character; as, indeed, it is to most Prussians. The civilian in Prussia has ever been, and still is, an inferior being; Minister, Chancellor, whatever he be, he must be a soldier also if he is to be on a level with the soldier, and one of that military caste which in Prussia is, in one sense, the true aristocracy of the country; if for no other reason than because the aristocrat belongs invariably to the profession of arms. Prince Bismarck, when I first saw him in 1866, was a major of cuirassiers. He has risen—slowly, inasmuch as he had other things than soldiering to do—to be general, and that is his rank in the army to-day.

He was now in black from head to foot; black double-breasted frock-coat buttoned to the throat across the chest, relieved by no order or decoration or any touch of colour except that he wore round his neck a yellow, pale yellow or perhaps cream-coloured, soft silk neckcloth, something like the cravat which prevailed in England in the earlier part of the century, but less voluminous, and tied carelessly. He wore no collar. He wore his coat, as I said, like a uniform. It set off the breadth of the shoulders, the depth of the chest, and the whole huge framework and vast body which of itself seemed to fill the room, whether he stood or sat. He towered far above everybody. His manner when he walked down the room as we came in was, above everything, that of the host anxious to

welcome his guests. Almost his first word was a regret that the clocks of Friedrichsruh did not keep what he called mid-German railway time; an artificial sort of time, based on an average of differences for the zone in which it is observed, and extremely helpful to the punctuality and smooth working of the German railway system. 'Still,' said he, 'here in Friedrichsruh we must have the real time.' All his life long he has gone for realities; the makebelieve having no attraction for him nor, to his mind, any validity in public or private affairs.

There are more Prince Bismarcks than one, and the one which the world knows best may not be the most real of all, nor quite like the one who reveals himself in his own home to his guests. E. and I were both, as we afterward agreed, struck by the same thing at first; by the kindness, the geniality of manner, the human and friendly quality in him which came at once to the surface when it was the moment for the expression of this quality, just as a different side of his character became evident when the circumstances were different. It is fair in judging a man to put aside, if one can, what one has heard, and to judge with one's own eyes and ears. The English courts have never liked hearsay evidence or second-hand testimony. If everybody is to base his belief on somebody else's observation, how is a genuine impression to be had? The word which comes most frequently to one's mind in thinking it all over, is simplicity or sincerity; that and, during the time you are with him, courtesy; courtesy not to us only but to everybody, and you shall by and by see it shown in another and not less charming way. To suppose that the first diplomatist of his time wears his heart on his sleeve, whether of a black coat or a uniform, is

absurd. I do not mean anything so absurd. What I do mean is that these amiable and friendly or, as I called them, human traits, are just as true as those by which he is more commonly known.

The face and head which rose out of the black coat and soft pale-yellow neckcloth are known to everybody by pictures and photographs and also by description, and yet they are not known. I have tried before now to describe them. Like others, I thought I knew them well. But every view is a new view. The power of the head and face is what it was. Age has altered, not impaired it. The firmness of outline remains. The muscles of the neck have not lost their elasticity, the head rises aloft and alert; in the carriage of it something haughty, something almost defiant and victorious, as of one who all his life long has had enemies to deal with, and the habit of overcoming them. The lines and outlines are drawn with a free hand and a wide sweep; with the breadth to which nature more often attains when she works on a great scale, as in fashioning a mountain range or shaping a continent. The actual measurements of the skull must be extraordinary. I do not know what they are, but no figures could express the sense of intellectual force and force of character.

Herr Lenbach once spoke of the face as faultless. Nothing, he thought, could be added or taken away without injuring it; all the features were perfect. This is stating the matter too strongly. Herr Lenbach has painted Prince Bismarck often and well; no one else so well; the world of the hereafter will owe much to him, for photographs may not last for ever, nor do photographs always tell you what you most want to know about a face. Perhaps, by long study and admiration, Lenbach has in his own mind idealised his sitter. He

does not idealise him on canvas except in the sense that he paints character as well as the external facts of face and figure. If the features were, as he said on that occasion, faultless, they would be, in Tennyson's phrase, faultily faultless. They are nothing of the kind. They are not regular, not classic, not moulded to any known type or accepted standard, or not all of them.

The face is the man, with all his individuality, and the eyes are the man. They are deep blue—the blue seems to have grown deeper with years—large, full, wide apart, beautiful in repose, and capable of expressing, without any help from the other features, the most various moods; authority, tenderness, anger, and many others. The dry light of pure intelligence seems their natural expression till it changes into some other, and when they are turned upon an individual or a Parliament in a spirit of inquiry, they look through and through the individual or the Parliament. The power of penetrating character, of judging men, has ever been one of his gifts and one of his sources of mastery in public affairs, and this also you see in these piercing orbs; the light of which is the next moment peaceful and kindly. The eyebrows, which are very heavy, are not so much tangled as interwoven; the full tufts of white hair braiding themselves into strands. The moustache, which overhangs without concealing the mouth or much altering the expression of the lips, follows the lines of the mouth, which at either end it closely embraces.

The masterful strength of all the lower part of the face is but the counterpart of the upper; the capaciousness of the brain and the wilfulness of the character are each indicated clearly; neither is out of proportion; there is neither excess of intelligence nor excess of firm-



ness; the two are in harmony, and you would never fear lest mere activity of mind should turn into Particularism, or lest mere determination should paralyse the thinking faculties; nor has either of these catastrophes occurred in actual life. The work of his life has, of course, left its mark upon the worker. The figure before you, with its simple and beautiful dignity, is the history of Germany for thirty years; a new Thirty Years' War, as beneficent as the old one was destructive. Prince Bismarck, and not the youthful Hohenzollern at Potsdam, is the incarnation of Imperial Germany.

I will supplement my memories and impressions by an extract from E.'s notes, from which, indeed, I have borrowed already, and shall borrow hereafter, though they were not meant to be printed.<sup>1</sup> E. saw the Prince for the first time, and says:

'Bismarck's personality gives one a great impression of size, but still more of strength and force, physical and mental. He looks at you very directly when speaking to you. Sat very straight in his high, straight-backed armchair, one hand holding his pipe, the other generally on the head of one of the dogs. His gestures few but forcible. Did everything with energy and earnestness, even to blotting his autograph with great care, so that it should not be smudged. His eyes very bright and full of fire when he was interested, with many twinkles of fun. English rather an effort at first, but came more and more easily. Very courteous; would not light his pipe till he had asked whether I minded. Evidently very kindly, and beloved by his household. Delights in his woods, and in his pets, not only in the dogs and the swans and ducks but

<sup>1</sup> 'E.' is my daughter Evelyn, my companion on this and other journeys, to whom my obligations are many.

in his chickens, which are allowed to invade the lawn, to the despair of the gardener. Rebecca, or Bekchen, the favourite of the two great Ulmar dogs, having been longer with him than that "Imperial intruder," Cyrus, who was given him by the present Emperor when the dog that "old William" gave him died.'

He spoke throughout in English, not without a certain effort. His mastery of English, for conversational purposes and upon a wide range of topics, is tolerably complete. It is not Professor's English, nor that of the student, but idiomatic, vigorous, often colloquial, and ever the English of the man of affairs and of the world. Language is to him an instrument, to be used as he uses other instruments, for his own ends. He has audacities of speech as well as of act. What is wanting to him in English is practice. He had of late, he said, no occasion to speak English more than twice a year, and his fluency was less than it had been. But if he sometimes had to search for the word, he always found it, and always the right word, and sometimes a picturesque one where greater familiarity might have led him or another to use a commonplace one. It was all the more instructive to behold him struggling amid these linguistic difficulties; you saw the machinery at work, as when on a great steamship you look through a glass partition at the engines doing their twenty knots an hour. Still, the medium sometimes hampered him; but when a change was suggested, he refused. It seemed as if it were part of his conception of his duties as host to express himself in the native tongue of his two guests.

Many years ago it was said of him that he had refused to allow French, which he knows as well as German, to be spoken in his presence. But this he

declared was an idle tale. 'I never presumed to dictate to others in private life. What I did was to protest against the use of French in the Prussian Diet, and in matters of German business.' His English grew more and more fluent as he talked. When, at one moment, some wished-for phrase would not frame itself to his mind, he turned to E., with the humorous smile so characteristic of him and so frequent, and said: 'There was a time when I could speak Russian,' and he added that he still occasionally read a Russian newspaper. His appointment as Ambassador to Petersburg dates from March 1859; then it was, no doubt, and during the three years he remained there, that he pursued his studies in Russian, and it may be taken for granted he knows the language now as well as then. His is not a mind which lets go of any useful knowledge once acquired.

It did seem, I will add, as if there were a ban upon French. Princess Bismarck much prefers it to English, which she speaks and understands not without effort. But when anything was said to her in French, she took pains to answer in English or German. Two years ago, in Homburg, I had heard her speak French during the greater part of a long and interesting dinner. Prince Bismarck used a single French expression, but that belongs to another part of the story.

## II

The Prince plunged almost at once into politics, but at first they were the politics of Friedrichsruh. 'They are quite enough to occupy me,' he said, 'and quite as intractable as any I have had to deal with elsewhere. For here at Friedrichsruh we have swans and ducks and

rats, who will not live at peace with each other if left to themselves, and they give me a great deal of trouble. The swans are not on good terms with the ducks; in fact, they want to eat them, or their young; and the rats are the enemies of both. It is extremely difficult to construct a constitution under which they can all thrive, or to make them understand what is best for each'—then after a pause, and with a twinkle, 'especially the rats.' He continued: 'I try to make my will prevail—I have tried that before, in other affairs, and sometimes succeeded and sometimes not—but I have to resort, as I did when I was Chancellor, to all sorts of devices. They will not do as I say merely because I say so. The swans have to be kept to themselves by a wire fence, as you will see. They are the majority, but majorities in Germany do not always have their own way.' This disquisition on the politics of the swans and ducks proceeded for some time with the utmost gravity. There was no effort to apply the allegory closely, or to identify the swans or the ducks, still less the rats, with any existing political party or group. It was, nevertheless, an allegory, and it was possible to imagine that, if one could look into the Prince's mind, similitudes might be discoverable.

The Army Bill followed not long after the swans and ducks, and was discussed with equal gravity. Prince Bismarck's opposition to the bill which the Emperor deems vital to Germany has never been a secret, and is no secret now. He gave his reasons, or some of his reasons, for thinking it a bad bill in itself. The army, he admitted, or indeed asserted, undoubtedly needs strengthening, but this bill would do it in the wrong way; or, rather, it would not strengthen the army, it would weaken it.

‘You do not want more men. Increasing the number of men would mean drawing off a great many officers to train the new soldiers. This would involve the making all at once of many new and inexperienced officers; weakening the army in one most essential respect. There are not non-commissioned officers enough; not enough who could drill all these new men and perform their present duties. You cannot create them. Where are they to come from? Nor, if you had the men and the officers all ready for the emergency which the framers of this bill contemplate, could you use them for an emergency. When a war breaks out there will be, at first, perhaps three or four battles at different points about the same time. The result of these battles may decide the campaign—must at any rate have a great influence on the fortunes of the war. They will be fought, each one of them, by perhaps 200,000 or at most a quarter of a million men on each side. You can use, that is to say, for your own emergency and for what is likely to be the most critical if not decisive moment of the conflict, a million of soldiers. You cannot use more except as reserves, and for future battles which may or may not have to be fought. But you have three millions already. What is the use of another 80,000?’

‘No, what the army wants is more artillery. We won our last war with France by artillery. The best artillery will win the next, even more certainly. So changed are the conditions of war that without a competent artillery the best infantry can no more by itself win a battle than cavalry could. But in this arm, though we may be still superior to France, we are not superior in the same proportion that we were in 1870. The certainty of victory depends on our maintaining not merely

a superiority, but a considerable superiority. That is what a wise bill would aim at. But this is not a wise bill, nor are the authors of it wise. The Emperor——’ but at that word came a pause. Then he resumed, changing the word :

‘The Government is weak and short-sighted. It has made mistake after mistake. It has flung away positions and advantages, not seeming in the least aware what it was doing at the time. Just when it was likely to be in need of money it cut off a large source of revenue by its new Commercial Treaties. No one had attacked these revenues. They were not felt as a grievance or a burden, and they produced fifty millions. Now they hope to carry the Army Bill, finance and all, by threatening the country, by frightening people, by prophesying war and ruin and the defeat of the army if it be not increased just as they propose. All this has a bad effect on the minds of the people, and especially, if they believe it, on the soldiers—discourages them, and makes them doubtful of themselves. But there is little evidence thus far that the panic that they have tried to breed has really taken root among the soldiers or among the German people. We shall know in a few weeks what the German people have to say to this new scheme, and what the fate of the Army Bill is to be.

‘The elections? Well, it is very difficult to see where a Government majority is to come from, or how they are to govern without a majority. It is true we carried on the government of Prussia from 1862 to 1866 without a budget and without a majority. But if I were again in office, which I shall never be, I could not give to his Imperial Majesty the advice which I gave to the King of Prussia at that time. The circum-

stances are entirely different, and Germany is not Prussia. I should not do it again. A policy of that kind is not to be drawn into a precedent.'

The remark of De Tocqueville, in the recently published *Souvenirs*, occurred to me: 'I have always noticed that in politics, grave errors are often due to having too good a memory.' I quoted it. 'Yes,' said the Prince, 'mere imitation does not answer. No two situations are alike, and a man should not copy even himself.'

He thought the Socialists more likely to gain strength in the coming elections than any other party; an opinion I had already heard in Berlin and elsewhere. What was said on this matter of elections should, however, be taken with reference to the date. The conversation occurred on the 17th of May. He was of the same mind about the Socialists as when himself in power. The growth of their numerical power in the country and in Parliament had not shaken his conviction of the soundness of his own policy toward them. He would have pursued it to the end.

'Whereas the Government, by treating the Socialists as a political party, a force in the country, to be met seriously and argued with, instead of as robbers and thieves to be crushed, has increased very much their power and importance and the consideration shown them. I would never have allowed this. They are the rats of the country, to be stamped out. I had foreseen this and feared it when I perceived the turn things were taking in a certain quarter. I warned the Emperor against it. The warning was thrown away. True, I was rather in favour of the Labour Conference. I assented to it. I hoped there would be a majority of sane and sensible men, or at least a good proportion of

people who would discuss the subject rationally, and that an impression would be made on the Emperor's mind. At the worst, it might serve to him as a kind of notice what he was to expect, and what sort of reception his own ideas would have among those whose benefit he was seeking and to whom he appealed. Nothing of the kind. The Emperor learned nothing. I was wrong—at anyrate I was disappointed. It all came to nothing.'

Socialism impressed him more as a danger to the Empire than to society—a nearer danger. The Socialists are anti-imperialists. Like Socialists elsewhere, like the trades-unions in England and in all other countries where they exist, they put class interests before the interests of the community. They want to subvert pretty much everything in Germany, no doubt, but first of all the army and the present system of compulsory service, and to abolish the taxes without which the army cannot be maintained. They care not if the Empire be left defenceless.

I asked if he thought the Socialists carried on their propaganda on a great scale in the army as in England, or at least in London, where Socialists enlist for the purpose, and where the public-houses frequented by the Guards are the headquarters and pulpits of Socialist and Anarchist missionaries. He thought it was not so in Berlin. The garrison of Berlin is collected from all over the Empire. The men from Cologne have little sympathy with the Pomeranians; the Bavarian and the Saxon do not fraternise in such matters. If there be a danger it would be, for example, in Hamburg, where the Socialists are strong, and a Hamburg regiment might be poisoned by Socialism. So might others.

His old partiality for Russia came out in the remark



that, whatever might be Germany's troubles from Socialism, they would never be aggravated from any Russian source. This in answer to my question whether, if Socialistic agitation became aggressive and disturbances arose in Germany, her neighbours, east and west, might not seize the occasion to attack her. But his faith in the good faith of the Emperor of Russia was not to be shaken. The state of things in Russia seemed to him to forbid such a supposition. The party of discontent, whether you call it Socialist or Anarchist or Nihilist, is much the same everywhere. If it is a danger to Germany, it is equally a danger to Russia; perhaps a much greater danger. The Czar is not the man to lend a hand to the enemies of order, of society. It was hardly worth while, after such a declaration as that, to press the military point of view. As to France, and what she might do in similar circumstances, Prince Bismarck omitted to express any opinion. The world knows well enough already what his views are of the political methods that have, during his time, been in vogue in that country. There is no reason to suppose he has changed these views.

Author as he is of that universal suffrage which he gave because it could not be withheld, Prince Bismarck's faith in the specifics of modern Radicalism, or of modern Democracy, has very definite limits. He repeated in a different form one or two remarks made during his journey last year, at Jena and elsewhere; which go to the root of things; Radical in that sense only. Nobody ever doubted that he believed it the business of a government to govern: a maxim which Radicalism both in Germany and in England is doing its utmost to discredit. But how are you to get your governing Government? What is it to be, who are to compose

it? 'There has grown up of late,' said Prince Bismarck, 'a notion that the world can be governed from below. That cannot be.' It is an apothegm which Socialist and Anarchist, and those political parties in all countries which seek for power by pandering to the mob, may consider. Mr. Gladstone himself might reflect on it, should he find time amid his present somewhat engrossing, and perhaps somewhat confusing, occupations.

In this view of Socialism, as in all Prince Bismarck said, two traits were visible. He was perfectly ready to own a mistake if he thought he had made one, and he was perfectly loyal to himself and his policy when he still believed himself in the right; no matter what turn events or opinion had taken. I doubt whether the opinion of others ever gave him much concern except as a force to be calculated and used or otherwise dealt with. To infallibility, however, he never made the least pretension. He did not claim it for himself, nor respect the claim when made for another. He scoffed at it. He listened with approval to the remark which—rightly or wrongly, I am not sure—I attributed to Newman in those honourable days when Newman stood out against the new Papal heresy of infallibility. 'Before infallibility can have any logical basis or become a rule of conduct, you must not only be infallible but infallibly certain you are infallible.'

I gathered that Prince Bismarck still considered he was right in entering upon a struggle with the Papacy; that the Kulturkampf was a sound policy; that the May laws were well conceived, and that his ultimate abandonment of the conflict and his compromise with the Pope and the Ultramontane party were the result of events which he was not bound to foresee, and could not have foreseen, and which nobody in fact did fore-

see. In other words, he entered upon the struggle with a good probability of success, and ultimately surrendered to the inevitable. The policy of conflict was a wise one when adopted, and the policy of retiring from the conflict was also wise. The stress of politics, the necessities of public life, forced him to play off one party against another—no new thing with him, indeed—and finally to purchase support from the Catholic party by concessions to Catholic demands. When the May laws were passed, their passage was imperative ; they were what Germany at that moment most needed. When they were repealed, other objects, only to be attained by consenting to their repeal, had become paramount—they, and no longer the May laws, were what Germany then most needed.

### III

What was said of England was free from any taint of that dislike to England which Prince Bismarck has sometimes been supposed to cherish. At the most it was indifference, and that not to the English people but to English politics, which he appeared to think sterile if not trivial. He has said in times past sharp things about England, and when German interests came into conflict with English interests he was for Germany and not for England. It might seem hard to censure him for that, or to require that a German should not be a German. But the strong point of the Englishman is not the imagination, nor the use of the imagination in public life. He does not readily put himself in the place of his adversary, nor take the other point of view. He likes better, when he finds somebody in his way, to make him get out if he can ; at any rate, to lift up his

voice, which is a powerful one, against the intruder. He has condemned Prince Bismarck before now for the very attitude and policy which, if the German had only been an Englishman, the Englishman would have praised, and would have thought the only natural or possible attitude. The Chancellor used to resent these asperities on public grounds. If the English press attacked him, he used the German press to reply to these attacks. But of any personal illwill to the English I never saw a trace.

That neither Prince Bismarck nor the great majority of his countrymen follows English politics closely is probably true. The treatment of such matters in the German press is but occasional. The most enterprising newspaper in Berlin thinks it has abundantly satisfied the appetite of its readers for general English news by a four-line telegram from London. Its money intelligence is fuller. Finance is of no nationality. Prince Bismarck's views, so far as he expressed them, may be summed up in a sentence or two :

‘If we have a controversy with England we pay attention to that, and try to understand the English side of it as well as ours. Other international questions, European and not Anglo-German merely, do sometimes, though not very often, make us turn our eyes to England. Otherwise, what chiefly concerns us is the effort of certain parties or persons in Germany to make us copy English Parliamentary institutions.’

This last was said with that gleam of humour which so often lighted up both his face and the subject he was discussing. He has the faculty of conveying or implying as much by a look as by speech. The listener will do well to be on the watch for it if he wishes not to miss the real significance of what is said. It comes

without warning. The glow comes into the deep blue eyes as suddenly as a flash of lightning, and the horizon is illuminated. It has long been known that Prince Bismarck viewed with no favour the notions of Anglicising Germany or German institutions which prevailed in more quarters than one. The letter just published, written before the marriage of the late Emperor Frederick to an English Princess, expressed in advance an opinion which circumstances obliged him to repeat in various forms afterward. The Germans do not like to be Anglicised any more than the English would like to be Germanised. The Briton did not even like to be criticised from a purely German point of view, nor to be told on high German authority many years ago, from an exalted position, that English Parliamentary institutions were on their trial. There is in Germany a party or a political coterie—more than one, no doubt—which has for a long time believed that Germany was to find salvation in England. It does not appear that Prince Bismarck shares that belief, or has any serious apprehension that it will prevail, or will ever become the opinion of a majority of the German people.

When Mr. Gladstone's name was mentioned—it came up incidentally—Prince Bismarck had not a word to say against the Englishman whom he has been supposed to like even less than other Englishmen. He thought it sufficient to express his admiration of Mr. Gladstone's oratory, and of his powers as a Parliamentarian. To Mr. Gladstone's admirers, of whom I am one, that may not seem a very complete estimate, but it must be taken as it is. There is no more. To the first statesman of Europe, the Prime Minister of England appears as a master of speech rather than of affairs—of Par-

liamentary tactics rather than of the principles and methods by which, as Themistocles said, a small nation may be made great, or a great nation greater still. That master-stroke of domestic policy, known popularly as Home Rule for Ireland, did not seem to have impressed the German Chancellor. It did not even interest him. I almost doubted whether he had any other idea about it than that it was a concession to a faction hostile to England and therefore dangerous to England, and likely to make the United Kingdom less united and the Empire less imperial. Nor was any other view really to be expected. Prince Bismarck's fame rests in great measure on his unification of Germany. He is the creator of an Empire, and his political sympathies with the Englishman who is trying to break up an Empire must necessarily be imperfect. When a man has applied the finest abilities and energies of his time to constructive work, it is natural that he should fail to appreciate an English statesman whose great triumph has been the annihilation of a Church, and whose old age is devoted to the dissolution of the legislative union between the two sections of the United Kingdom. Let us excuse Prince Bismarck so far as we can, and not forget that he has full faith in Mr. Gladstone as an orator.

I quoted, while this topic was still being talked of, the remark of a Frenchman less well known than he deserves to be, M. Doudan, who said of Victor Hugo, 'A force de jouer avec les mots, il en est devenu l'esclave'; and this I applied to Mr. Gladstone. 'Yes,' answered Prince Bismarck, 'les mots se jouent de lui.' This was the only French phrase he allowed to pass his lips, and with this, too, came a humorous and illuminative gleam into his eyes.

He would see as clearly as anybody the peril in such linguistic pastimes as Mr. Gladstone permits himself. They become, presently, not pastimes but the serious occupation of his mind and of his life, and the peril is lest words and not acts seem to him the real thing, and mere dexterity of speech the faculty most essential to the ruler of an Empire. Not so has Prince Bismarck formed his conception of public life, or of statesmanship. If he be not an orator, as Mr. Gladstone is and as Antony said Brutus was, he has at least the gift of picturesque and vivid speech, of imagery, of using images or incidents familiar to his audience in a totally novel and unexpected way. His history is full of them, his pithy sayings are in every German mouth and have even been quoted not infrequently in England. How many of Mr. Gladstone's idolaters can quote a sentence from any of his innumerable speeches, and how many can they quote? The gift of condensation or brevity is not his. To put a thing too briefly might pin its author to a definite statement, or even pledge. Nor is brevity or directness a peculiarly German quality either. The Prince's epigram was French in something more than words; in its brilliancy, its suddenness—for it followed instantaneously on the quotation—its conciseness; in short, in various qualities which we do not always associate with the word German. Prince Bismarck is assuredly a German of the Germans, but his intellectual equipment is free from the narrowness of mere Teutonic Chauvinism.

It is a delicate business to repeat opinions about persons, and I will name only one other of those whom Prince Bismarck named. He spoke of Lord Rosebery as an Englishman who had high qualities for the conduct of public business and had shown them as Foreign

Minister. 'But is he also an orator?' queried the Prince. You were left to guess whether he really considered rhetorical fluency an indispensable adjunct to the other qualities of an English Minister, or whether he would have preferred to be told that Lord Rosebery could not speak. It had, however, to be said in the interests of truth that he could, but that, like Lord Salisbury, he thought the ideal Foreign Secretary should be dumb; and with this Prince Bismarck seemed content. The friendship between the two is well known.

The indifference the Prince showed toward English politics did not extend to France:

'If you live next a volcano, you naturally watch for the smoke out of the crater.'

But of an immediate eruption he seemed to have no fear. It would be idle for him or for anybody to remind the French of Carlyle's maxim about consuming their own smoke. The French like to hear only what is agreeable. They have reversed the old motto, and it reads in France, '*Grata pro veris*.' Probably it will do no service to the memory of Jules Ferry among his own countrymen to say that Prince Bismarck thought his loss a serious one to France; 'a strong man gone.' The tribute is, nevertheless, one which Jules Ferry's friends may not be sorry to know of. It is more than the Prince said of any living Frenchman.

A journey to America was suggested, but the Prince's No was peremptory. He would like to go, but the fatigues and inconveniences of travel are such as he does not care to encounter without a strong reason. He cannot sleep well out of his own bed, and sleep is to him medicinal and essential. 'Dr. Schweninger would not let me go!' The Chicago Exhibition?



No, that was no temptation. He had never cared for exhibitions nor ever thought the benefits of them considerable. They do not benefit the country in general nor do much good to industries nor to commerce. The people who profit are the people concerned in the keeping of inns, and in getting money out of travellers; hardly anybody else. The enthusiasm about exhibitions seemed to him factitious, except so far as it was sentimental. Chicago belongs, I presume, to the sentimental division. It appeared that his opinion on the subject of Chicago, and of exhibitions in general, had been desired not long since by, I suppose, some representative of the Chicago press; as if Chicago were too modest to feel sure that its exhibition was the right thing. But the Prince, whose sense of what is comic has a wide range, had made answer that he had no time to form views on the subject of exhibitions, or of the Chicago Exhibition in particular. He could find interest in a visit to America without that. His own German fellow-countrymen in America would be attraction enough for him. They were to his mind, though I insisted we had no better citizens, still German and still his fellow-countrymen.

## IV

Twice and thrice Prince Bismarck expressed in no doubtful terms his content in his retirement, and his conviction that his withdrawal from the public service is final. 'My time is over,' he said, with a gesture which meant as much as the words. And still more expressively: 'I shall not go into action again.'

Never once had he a harsh, or even a hard, word for the Emperor personally. What he said showed, or

implied, an odd mixture of respect for the Emperor as Emperor, and of something that was not exactly respect for his abilities or character. His eyes shone more than once when he referred to the Emperor's speeches and his volunteered visits to so many different courts. Perhaps the old Chancellor took a humorous view of what may seem to him the rather boyish, and even schoolboyish, exploits of his august master. But there was no bitterness, no clearly expressed resentment at the Emperor's treatment of himself, and he gave no such accounts of his dismissal as may be heard in Berlin and elsewhere.

One of these is striking enough to be quoted, coming as it did from one who knows both Emperor and Chancellor. 'The young Emperor,' said this well-informed person, 'got rid of Bismarck because he could not bear to feel himself in the presence of a superior intelligence. With all his quickness and energy, he is not well-informed, and he has not thought seriously on the most serious matters of policy. It was hateful to him to have to listen to one who had; and who, with every deference of manner, nevertheless looked him straight in the face while he put his own views before him. Needless to say that Bismarck's language was as decorous as it was weighty. But there is nothing which an Emperor who believes himself Emperor and King by Divine Right can so ill endure as to be made to feel himself in the wrong, and that his servant, with no Divine Right to back him, knows better than he. And that is why he got rid of Bismarck.'

But you would hear nothing of that kind at Friedrichsruh.

The question of Prince Bismarck's relations with the Emperor came up in connection with two separate

matters—Prince Albrecht's letter, and the ceremony at Görlitz. On the first, I prefer to say nothing and to quote nothing. The second requires less discretion. The facts are known. A monument to the late Emperor William was to be unveiled at Görlitz,—has since been unveiled—with much, but not too much, pomp and parade; the young Emperor duly present and making the inevitable speech. It is, however, a monument, not to the late Emperor alone, but also to Count Moltke and Prince Bismarck. The old Emperor's statue is flanked and supported by these two statues of his two chief comrades; the two chief architects of his great fortune and of Germany's. The town of Görlitz had asked Prince Bismarck to take part in the ceremony. He spoke in terms of deep feeling of the honour done him by setting up his statue, and by the invitation. But he could not accept the invitation of the town. It would bring him into the presence of the Emperor, and as he had not been summoned by the Emperor he could not go. It would be a breach of etiquette—of military etiquette above all. Again the soldier showed himself. 'I am still a General in the army, and a General cannot present himself before the Emperor, who is his commander-in-chief, without an order.' Any word or message from the Emperor, signifying his desire that Prince Bismarck should be present at Görlitz, would have been equivalent to a command and must have been obeyed. But it was very evident that, while the Prince regretted on other grounds his absence, and though he was perfectly sensible of the discourtesy shown him, he rejoiced to escape the necessity of finding himself in the Emperor's presence. He did not wish to go where he must in some way or other come in contact with the present ruler of Germany. He did

not wish for a meeting. It would have put him in an awkward position; it might have led to grave consequences. 'As an officer, as a gentleman, I could not have refused the hand of reconciliation if held out to me in such circumstances; and a reconciliation, or offer of reconciliation, is what it would have seemed to the public.'

So far Prince Bismarck. But the Emperor's conduct in this matter concerns others than the ex-Chancellor; concerns himself, first of all, and concerns Germany, and public opinion in Germany and elsewhere. The Prince uttered no complaint, but why are not others to say what they think, and who is there who can think the Emperor's conduct magnanimous? Nobody knew better than he that it was impossible for Prince Bismarck to go to Görlitz except upon his summons. He would not suffer him to take part in an act of homage to the King and Emperor whom he had served for thirty years; nor to witness the honour done to himself. It seems to have been thought in court circles that Prince Bismarck should have asked permission. That will do for a court view, but Germany is not peopled entirely with courtiers, and even the courtier might, if he could detach his mind sufficiently, doubt whether Prince Bismarck was quite the man to sue for leave to come into the presence of the sovereign who had dismissed him with insult and ignominy from his counsels. The Prince, with his ineradicable Prussian loyalty to the King who has never been loyal to him, may find such excuses for Imperial incivility as I have given above. The world is not all Prussian, and may take and express a view of its own.

But neither with reference to this or to any other subject did Prince Bismarck's language about the

Emperor pass the bounds which, as an old servant of the House of Hohenzollern, he has always imposed upon himself. Reconciliation is one thing, self-respect is another, and respect for the Throne and for him who sits on it is a third. For reconciliation I do not think Prince Bismarck cares, and I am certain he will not take that first step to it which his enemies in the press and elsewhere are for ever urging him to take. The value of advice from his enemies is a thing he understands. I am expressing my own opinion. I could not justify it by a single word which fell from Prince Bismarck's lips in my hearing. I have no authority to speak for him. I am only recording an impression derived from various sources. Any reconciliation that might take place would, I imagine, be merely formal: save in one event only, which Prince Bismarck is too good a German to wish for—I mean in the event of a disaster, external or internal.

The Emperor's character is what it is. He cannot make himself over. His confidence in himself is unshaken by a long series of mistakes and failures. He, at any rate, is not only infallible but infallibly certain he is infallible. He does not want Ministers, he wants clerks. Of what use could a Bismarck be to a ruler of this temper? The whole truth about the Emperor's dismissal of his Chancellor has never yet been told. Until it is known, the public is not in a position to judge of the probabilities of what is called a reconciliation, or to appreciate all the difficulties which stand in the way of cordial relations between the two men. It is not 'generous indulgence' of which Prince Bismarck is in search, nor is he, so far as one can judge, consumed by a passionate wish to see once more the inside of the Palace gates, whether at Potsdam or Berlin.

It is perfectly true that Prince Bismarck has expressed himself freely touching the acts and policy of his successor, and of the men, or some of them, now about the Emperor. I do not believe he has confidence in all of these gentlemen—confidence in either their ability or their political honesty. But since when was it thought disloyal or unpatriotic to hold the opinion that the advisers of the Crown are not all they should be? That is not an English view, nor is it indeed German. Ministers are judged by their public acts. Has Count von Caprivi been a successful Minister? Was the repeal of the law against the Socialists wise? Have the Commercial Treaties increased the prosperity of Germany? Was the School bill a good measure—a bill for making the Government the arbiter of German consciences, and turning the Emperor into Pope? Did the enforced withdrawal of that bill, in obedience to an overwhelming public opinion, strengthen the Ministry or the Emperor? Has the present Chancellor shown himself a master of the art of Parliamentary government? Has the Army bill been carried? And is it ‘vindictive’ to be aware of these errors, and to decline to identify yourself with men or measures alike condemned by failure? When Lord Salisbury was turned out of office, did he feel obliged to approve everything his successor attempted? And why should there be less freedom of opinion, or less freedom of expression, for Prince Bismarck than for Lord Salisbury or for Mr. Gladstone?

It will do no harm to remember that Prince Bismarck, with all his ambition, has throughout his career kept his ambition strictly in service to his country. It has not been selfish. It has not been personal. It is the aggrandisement of Germany, not the aggrandisement of Bismarck, which has been the aim and rule of his

public conduct. He has stood up for Germany, for the true interests of Germany, against Emperor, against public opinion, against Europe, against Germany herself. No doubt he has ambition and has pride, and has his share of other human failings, but they have not been suffered to turn him aside from the one overruling purpose of his life—to do at each given moment what is best for his country. There is the record of each crisis to prove it.

There is in Germany a large party which goes for the Government—any Government—just as steadily as the Irishman ‘goes agin it’—against any Government. This party always has organs. It might be difficult to distinguish between its organs and the organs subsidised, whether with money or news, by the Government. Perhaps it does not matter. This party and its organs in the press have been industriously engaged in praising Count von Caprivi since he became Chancellor. There is a public in other parts of Europe, even in England, which holds similar views, which is apt to regard a Ministry that is in as better than any Ministry that is out. When Prince Bismarck was expelled by the Emperor from the public service, the world held its breath for a while. When things seemed to go on much as before, people recovered the power of respiration and of speech and cried out, ‘You see Prince Bismarck’s fall makes no difference. The Emperor steers the ship “full steam ahead” just as well without any pilot, or with Count von Caprivi as pilot’; which comes perhaps to nearly the same thing.

That cry has been heard continually since. What did these gentlemen expect? Did they expect the German Empire to go to pieces as soon as Prince

Bismarck ceased to govern it? That might have been a testimony to his personal importance, but would have been a poor proof of sagacity in laying its foundations, or of the stability and solidity of its construction. Mr. Tenniel's masterly cartoon in *Punch*, 'Dropping the Pilot,' made an impression on the English mind, and on other minds. There was a notion, rather widespread, that without the Pilot who had weathered the storm the ship must go on the rocks. But if there are no rocks and no storm and an open sea and plain sailing, the ship does very well for a time without any Pilot. Such has been Germany's good fortune for the last two years, at least so far as foreign policy is concerned. But there must come an hour when it will be seen whether a Pilot is wanted or not.

This is no place to consider the details of German politics, but you may find room for one general reflection. Down to the death of the old Emperor in March 1888, and down to the discharge of Prince Bismarck in 1890, it was still possible to say that in the public life of Germany the efficient principle was the kingly principle. There were constitutions, there were Parliaments, there was a Press, more or less free, there was universal suffrage. Government had become, as it is apt to become in these days of democracy, veiled or unveiled, a very complicated affair; but on the whole the King was the real ruler of Prussia, and the King under the name of Emperor the real ruler of Germany. Why? Because of tradition, and because Prince Bismarck, while framing constitutions and putting the ballot into every man's hand, still kept the substance of power in his own or in the King's. For every open space to which he gave the people access, he built a new buttress to the Throne. He fostered the kingly idea. He



nourished the sentiment of loyalty, always a very strong one, in every Prussian breast. He left the House of Hohenzollern stronger than he found it, and the ascendancy of Prussia, wherein lies the salvation and the hope of all Germany, undisputed and indisputable.

But now? The headstrong caprices of this boy-Emperor have undone half the work. Reverence for the Throne is undermined. How can you revere the author of the speeches of William the Second? The Parliament, no longer guided, no longer feeling that it has a master who will bend it to his own uses, is getting out of hand. Parliamentary institutions are not founded in the hearts of the German people, whatever English enthusiasts may think. They play at Parliaments. The supreme direction of affairs, and the ultimate authority, rest with King and Kaiser. He can declare war and make peace and make treaties. The word 'defensive' is supposed to limit his right of declaring war, but was there ever a war which the aggressor might not call defensive if he liked?

These immense powers remain, but they can only be used effectively by a sovereign who has the confidence of his people. If their confidence in him is impaired, they turn elsewhere. The Reichstag is gaining what the Emperor loses. Whether Germany will be better or worse off under institutions which require generations for their growth and development, may be an open question. But there can be no question of the change that is going on; of the decay of the principles and methods of political action under which Prussia has grown to be what she is, and by virtue of which the German Empire was called into being. No question, either, that the change is due to Prince Bismarck's

fall ; to the elimination of the most experienced statesman in Europe from kingly and imperial councils, and to the unchecked conduct of affairs by a young Emperor who has little experience, and in whom the want of real political capacity is coupled with the most energetic self-confidence known to mankind.

## V

The Prince indicated his view clearly enough of his own way of meeting calumnies. It came out *à propos* of a brief discussion on the different kinds of journalism in Germany, France, England, and America. Renan, I said, laid it down as a rule which he had adopted early in life on the counsel of Bertin, editor of the *Journal des Débats*, never to contradict anything. He did not contradict the current story that the Rothschilds had paid him a million francs for the *Vie de Jésus*, nor even deny the authenticity of spurious writings published under his name.

‘What is that,’ said the Prince, ‘but contempt for public opinion? A writer of books like Renan, a recluse, a man who holds aloof from the world, may be able to afford himself that luxury. A statesman, a politician, cannot. Public opinion is one of the forces on which he relies. If it is corrupted, is he not to purify it? What becomes of his usefulness if he is discredited?’

He sees a good many newspapers, knows what is said of him, and has means of denying such of the countless fabrications about himself as he thinks deserve notice. The German press has its own ideas of what is right and wrong in such matters, and its own standard of journalism. ‘Only printing ink on paper,’ was the

Prince's well-known account of the matter in a speech in the Reichstag in 1888. He discussed other papers than German, but in the same tone. It may be doubted whether he is aware of the immense difference between the Press of Germany and the Press of England or America, arising in part out of national characteristics, and in greater part out of the financial independence of the more important papers in both England and the United States. While he was still at lunch, a bundle of German papers was brought in to him, all scored in blue pencil. He glanced at them, laid them down, and said nothing.

It was more interesting to see his pipe brought in ; a huge machine, with a porcelain jar two feet high in which it rested. With it came a round lacquered tray on which was a collection of instruments, including a lead pencil some fifteen inches long, two silver paper-knives in the form of daggers, both sheathed, a silver letter-opener, and others which, it presently appeared, were tobacco-stoppers and rods for cleaning the pipe, also sheathed. All these he showed us, one after the other, remarking that he could not use quite so many at once, 'but people sometimes like to give me presents, and these are among them.' He would not light his pipe till E. had told him she liked smoking. Then he launched again into talk with fresh zest. The talk flowed on for another hour, the Prince choosing his own topics, dismissing one with a flashing sentence, enlarging upon another, the face radiant at times, the eyes burning, and then the fire dying out to flame up again ; and sometimes the cold glitter of steel came into them, and then the words cut like steel.

All the while his dogs were about him, appealing to him for the notice they did not often get except from

the caress of his left hand. If he would not respond, they turned to us. They had the frank good-nature of the breed, and readily put their huge heads into any friendly hand. Once the Prince tossed a biscuit to Rebecca, which she caught cleverly. His gesture, the movement of the arm, the precision, the rapidity of the act, were one more characteristic of the extraordinary man who can do nothing like other men, and who never thought it beneath him to do the least or most trivial thing as well as it could possibly be done. The dogs are magnificent creatures, one blue-black, one of a dense bluish-grey colour, with broad heads and amiable, piercing eyes, and that kind of powerful slouching movement which one more commonly sees behind the bars of a cage, and the gracefulness which comes from tremendous strength. The Prince and the dogs were on easy terms; his manner to them and theirs to him was charming, but you could see that discipline was maintained. At night they sleep in his bedroom.

Meantime, all the company except ourselves had slipped away, leaving the Prince to talk on to his guests. We had been two hours at table before there came a pause, and then Dr. Chrysander reappeared to suggest that it was time for the siesta which Dr. Schweninger prescribes to his patient. So with a word of excuse and a half protest against submission, the Prince departed. We were shown to our rooms, and thence Dr. Chrysander fetched us soon after for a stroll in the forest. The forest is a real forest, of red and white beech and much other good timber, well grown but none of very great size, and wherever we went an uncleared undergrowth; the whole seamed with roads and opening into sunny glades

clothed in a rough turf and sparkling with spring flowers. The wood is peopled with deer, of which we saw none, and there are wild boar and much other less formidable game; altogether a royal preserve. The Prince loves it, loves the trees and the stream and the shaded walk and the views from the terrace and from the benches along the path. One which takes him by the bank and beyond the sloping meadow to the forester's house is his favourite. He walks there daily, and daily people gather in the road he has to cross, near the bridge, to see him go by. Here, in and about his home, he is loved, and the love and lovers come from all over Germany as well. Not a week passes that there is not a deputation, or a band of students, or some other company of honest Germans with a true reverence for the greatest German of all. Often they arrive daily, sometimes more than one in a day. There had been eight hundred children the day before. There were men waiting by the bridge as we passed. The swans were waiting in their wired-off demesne; a duck with her ducklings, four little bits of floating fluff, sailing by triumphantly, out of all danger from the swans; the living and visible proof of the success of those domestic politics we had heard described at luncheon.

As we wandered on, Dr. Chrysander talked to us of the Prince, of his affection for his woods, of his delight in planting trees, and in the young firs—he calls them Christmas firs; of other tastes and habits. There came, he said, 9000 telegrams and letters on the Prince's last birthday last month; some 2000 more than last year; which we liked to hear, and thought loyal of the Germans. Many came from other parts of the world, from other continents, from the antipodes. The presents were in great number. Each telegram, each

letter, each present is acknowledged, sooner or later, in the Prince's handwriting. I asked the excellent secretary how long this business of answering took. 'We did not finish last year till September,' he said. He seldom answers an ordinary letter himself; prefers using the hand of his secretary. Whoever has seen his autograph will understand that the muscular fatigue of forming the letters and words must be considerable. His handwriting, like everything else about him, is on a large scale; the signature no larger than the body of the letter. He prefers reading to writing, and reads much. E. asked about the many portraits and statues and busts which we had seen at Schönhausen and here and wherever we went in Germany. 'Oh, the Prince dislikes sitting,' was the answer. 'He will hardly sit even to Lenbach.' And he told us how the painter comes to Friedrichsruh and has to take his chance, or watch for his opportunities; talking with the Prince and observing him as best he can. The last portrait he painted shows you such a Bismarck as you might fancy thundering at a stubborn majority in the Reichstag; full of righteous anger and stern purpose; lightnings in the eye and the mouth hard as iron. Well, the history of that portrait is this. Prince Bismarck hates crows because they are the enemies of the singing birds he loves. He and Herr Lenbach were walking in the woods when the Prince caught sight of one of these detested crows on the branch of a tree. It was his sudden glance of anger at the crow which the artist seized—one can imagine the look, fierce and even deadly if a look could kill—and this it was which he put on paper when they got home, and the sketch became the portrait we see. It was no Socialist nor Particularist nor human Philistine of any species,

which provoked this Olympian wrath which Lenbach has fixed for ever on the speaking canvas ; only a crow with no love for music or for musical birds.

Our walk took us three or four miles through the forest. As we came near the house again we heard singing, and turning into the grounds behind the house saw Prince Bismarck and the family on the balcony, and below it a group of school-children from Hamburg. They were the singers, and sang song after song. There were tables on the grass, and tea and cake and other good things for the children, and the inevitable beer for the masters and perhaps for the children too. We went up on the balcony, to which there is a flight of steps, and tea was going on there also. What I call a balcony is more like a veranda without a roof, a broad square stone terrace with stone balustrade and room for thirty or forty persons besides the tables and seats. This is the scene of the receptions and greetings which occur so often, and here at any rate you are remote enough from the outer world—nothing but the house, which encloses two sides of the grounds, and the trees with every tint of spring green against the dark firs, and flowing stream, and the sloping meadow and woods and blue sky—blue with a black thundercloud coming up. The Prince had completed his costume with a black soft felt hat with sugar-loaf top and broad brim, and carried a stick on which he leaned a little as he walked. He might not care much for the songs ; it is the music of birds he cares for, and he pretends to like the organ in the sitting-room, a mechanical organ ; likes it because, as he said with quaint kindness, it is good exercise for the Princess. But the good little German boys and girls went on singing in good faith, and the Prince

listened and stood at the balustrade looking down with a softened face and friendly eyes at his young admirers. The songs ceased after a while, and one of the masters made a little speech, asking his pupils to notice the beauty of the spring and its foliage, and telling them that if they had a fatherland in which they might peacefully enjoy its beauty, they owed it to the great man who stood there on the terrace. The little creatures cheered with their shrill voices with right goodwill, again and again. Then Prince Bismarck, instead of saying a word or two formally and stiffly from his platform above their little heads, went down the steps, and stood among them, and put his hand on those nearest them, and said simply: 'I thank you very much, my dear children, and your teachers for coming here and singing to me. And I hope you won't get wet going home.' The heavy drops were already falling, and away went the children. But of rain there was almost none. The Prince thought his black, sugar-loaf, broad-brimmed hat a better protection against the rain than an umbrella; which he never carries. He never carried one in politics either. With his hat and the huge blue cloth coat we had seen in the hall, he defies the rain. He came up the steps again and the party sat down in groups. Dr. Schweninger had arrived, coming by train from Berlin to see his patient, from whom he is seldom very long away. It is not that he is ill, but that he requires watching if he is to be kept in full health. He still has a little of the neuralgia which has tormented him so long. The seventy-eight years he has completed have not tamed his energy, nor does banishment from the public service mean idleness to him. I fancied from what I saw and heard that he was likely to do too



much unless hindered. A man who has in times past thought sixteen or eighteen hours a fair day's work, does not readily reduce his allowance to within such limits as seem sufficient to the medical mind. Dr. Schweninger thought him tired and prescribed rest, but the Prince said he would take his rest talking. A personality, this skilful physician, not tall, very dark, eyes and hair and beard jet-black, the short beard so full that not much of the face was visible except the eyes which nothing could obscure,—the eyes of a man whose business is to find out secrets which nature, or perhaps sometimes his patient, would not disclose; with a half medical, half military manner. Seldom in this nation of soldiers is the military manner wholly wanting. With what intelligence and patient firmness and success he has devoted himself to Prince Bismarck, all the world knows. The Prince introduced us. 'Here,' he said with an affectionate glance at the doctor, 'is the man who, if you are ill, can tell you so, and can make you well.' It made one feel as if one ought to have a malady at once, in order to profit by this opportunity.

As we sat upon the open balcony and watched the clouds gather and the woods darken, it was easy to reflect that elsewhere in Germany than at Friedrichsruh there were clouds and gloom. It was an excellent opportunity for Prince Bismarck, had he been so minded, to pursue his political allegory, and broaden it, and give us a view of Germany as it may yet be, in storm and stress, and without a Pilot. But that has never been his way. He has ever preferred, though the most far-sighted of statesmen, the practical to the imaginative treatment of public affairs; nor is he the man to speak of himself as one who rides in the whirlwind and directs the storm.

He watched the storm and talked of Protection ; a subject on which, as on others, his opinions remain unchanged, and are known. It was Protection to Agriculture which seemed, on this occasion and later, to interest him most. The American view of Protection is not that, nor the English, though his discourse upon the distress of the German farmer and German landowner, with whom he identified himself, would have found an echo in many an English breast. But I will pass from that.

It is time to bring this long narrative to an end, or rather I will defer the completion of it to what I hope is a distant date. I omit many incidents of a visit which was full of them, and full of a kind of interest which I find it difficult and indecorous to express to the public. What there is of the pathetic in Prince Bismarck's position is not what he would care to have dwelt on. Never once during all our conversation was there a word or look which betokened on his part any feeling that he was entitled to the sympathies of the world. He would be a bold man who should offer them to the Iron Chancellor. For of iron the old Chancellor still is. If his sternness softened at moments, it was never toward himself, and certainly never toward his enemies. You would hardly know who were his enemies but for the restraint he put upon himself in speaking of them. If he is ever to avenge himself upon them, it will not be by mere invective. There came no suggestion from him of vengeance in any form, nor need there come from others, at present. The most cruel fate one can wish to the present Emperor is that he should some day look at his conduct to Prince Bismarck in the light of what Prince Bismarck has done for him and for Germany.

History will have its own judgment to give on these matters. It may not take much account of the prim criticisms that have been bestowed on him during his retirement. It is more likely to consider that he has fought his own fight in his own way; not yours, nor mine, nor anybody's else, but his own. He is himself, as he has ever been, adjusting his words and acts to his conception of his duty,—a high one whether right or wrong. The stream of his life flows on as it has ever flowed, 'brimming, and bright, and large.' The fulness and the strength of it are what they were. They were never dependent on Imperial favour. They are not now. And if one may not say that there is something infinitely pathetic in his comparative solitude at Friedrichsruh, it is permissible to see in his attitude all the old dignity, and an unshaken firmness of soul.

## THE MASTER OF BALLIOL

[LONDON, OCTOBER 1893]

### I

DR. JOWETT was remarkable for many things, but most of all for being Dr. Jowett. He played a great part in the intellectual history of England for at least a quarter of a century. He was never the head of what is called a movement. He never led a party. His name was not a flag. But he was a great teacher, a great head of a great college, one of the foremost figures of a great university, a clergyman whose relation to his Church was like that of no other, a scholar who was equally at home with St. Paul and Plato, a Professor of Greek who knew English at least as well as the Hellenic tongue, a theologian to whom dogma was ever a secondary matter, a University Don whose horizon was world-wide;—and this last is the rarest eulogy of all.

But he was before and above all other things an individuality. He had definite conceptions of life, and he acted on them. He took the liberty—there is none other the world so often resents—of being himself and not somebody else, and as he had great natural force of character and great acquirements, he impressed himself very deeply on his time, and on those about him. Nobody is left to whom he can be compared. Another of the giants of a great generation is gone. Most of his great contemporaries had passed before him. He

dies at seventy-six, and whether you look among the men of his own period, or of the generation which came after him, or among those who have since begun to make their mark in life, there are not many whose eminence is comparable to his, or who give promise of approaching his rare excellence of life.

It may be left to experts to assess the exact technical value of his educational work at Oxford, but one does not need to be an expert to see that it had a very great value indeed. You have only to ask what Balliol College would have been without him, and what the University of Oxford would have been without him. There is a new Oxford since Jowett first appeared on the scene. The mediæval Oxford has given place to a modern Oxford. She is no longer monastic, no longer ecclesiastical, no longer exclusive, no longer under the domination of a dead spirit, but of a spirit that maketh alive. She has opened her arms and broadened her methods, and liberalised her ideas of education and of university life. In all these changes Jowett bore a part, often a foremost part. It is difficult to conceive of the Oxford of to-day without him,—almost as difficult as of Balliol minus his all-pervading and overmastering personality.

That is, however, but a single view of an activity that was many-sided. He was one of a band of men who, in our time, have elevated the general conception and theory of education, and of its place in the world. Teaching was to him the highest function, but in no narrow sense of the word. He thought it the great business of the University to raise up men,—or, in his own phrase, English gentlemen, ‘who felt that there would be no shame in entering on a career in which learning and usefulness would be the only claims to

distinction.' In these ambitious days the aim may seem simple; but, in common with most men of ample nature, he loved simplicity, and the word to him was not a criticism but a eulogy. Many of his pupils, the men whom he taught and formed, are men of high distinction. They are the foremost to do justice to their master. You will hear them speak of Jowett not merely as one who taught them Greek, but who taught them the conduct of life. In them he lives and will long live. They are his best epitaph,—they and the extraordinary company of friends whom he had gathered about him. Matthew Arnold, Dean Stanley, Lord Coleridge, Lord Bowen, the new Lord of Appeal, Mr. Justice Wright, at whose home he died, Lord Rosebery, to whom he had and who had for him a close attachment, the Speaker and many more, attest the quality and range of his friendships.

He showed in many ways that his regard for his pupils was sincere, and he attached many of them to him but also repelled many by his manner. The average student was repelled. He liked and respected his master in the abstract, or at a distance, but Jowett in the flesh and regarding him across a table was too much for his nerves. There was benignity in his look, but he looked through you all the same. The true way was to face him, to stand up to him; not aggressively, but quietly. A boy who had been well bred and used to social intercourse on equal terms got on very well with him. The master liked to be met on equal terms. It was, however, difficult for a mere pupil to be on equal terms with the head of a great college.

It was his habit to ask a certain number of his pupils to breakfast with him, once or twice during a term or oftener. All but the boldest felt it to be an ordeal.

He welcomed his young guests with a tepid shake of the hand and the glance of a cross-examining counsel. The rest was often silence. The meal went on for many minutes, perhaps, without a word. Jowett was silent by way of encouraging the boys to talk. The boys were silent from nervousness, or from not understanding the mood of the master and the ways of the place, or from a not unnatural fear of one of those forked sentences which at any moment might issue from those thin lips, piercing and transfixing whatever or whoever was within range. It was awkward enough to sit through such a meal; the expectation, the possibility of a catastrophe present to everybody's mind except to the host's.

He, in his real kindliness of spirit, may not have understood why he should be a terror to those who were not evildoers and to whom he meant well. If one of the company spoke out frankly and simply, and had intelligence, all went well. The master listened with a pleased or, at worst, a tolerant expression of countenance. Sometimes he answered, and the answer was not always an epigram. It was interesting to note how long this awe of the pupils lasted, even among those who knew themselves his favourites. One night at a house in the country one of them, long since emancipated from university control, a legislator in his early youth and reputed confident in his own powers, was intercepted by Jowett after dinner on his way to the smoking-room. 'Come to my room and have a talk,' said the master, in tones both winning and peremptory. The ex-student of Balliol had no choice but to obey. He went, sending a glance over his shoulder which was comic in its dismay. It was more than an hour before he appeared in the smoking-room. We asked how it

had gone. 'The old boy was delightful,' he answered, 'and I never was so glad when anything was over.'

For a man who had a great and a deserved renown as a talker, Dr. Jowett was often singularly silent. He was silent unless the company pleased him, and unless the topic pleased him. Some of those who saw him but seldom, and then not in favourable circumstances, have called him rude. He never was rude, or never consciously so, but he had no doubt a certain intellectual arrogance which, though it was entirely intellectual, expressed itself at times in a way which gave offence. He had fits of apparent abstraction. When they seemed to be deepest, they were broken by a remark which indicated that nothing of what had been said had escaped him, and that nothing had pleased him. These hard sayings were delivered with a gentleness of demeanour which added to the sting. Woe to the man who talked on a subject he did not understand, if he talked pretentiously. For pretence and for the insincerity of character which it implies, Jowett had no mercy.

He would talk, nevertheless, on the most various subjects, and almost always with a marked detachment of mind. You could not fail to see that he held strong opinions and held them strongly. But he liked to put forward his views softly and, as it were, experimentally. His attitude of mind was that of the sceptic; not in the coarser sense of the word, but in the sense in which it is descriptive of Montaigne and of Pascal, and of Socrates and Plato. If he practised the Socratic method it was not in an argumentative way, and I never knew him persevere with it very far. He preferred to let the talk conduct itself, to wait for the opinions of others, to wait till the topic came round to him, and then to deliver himself of a few luminous sentences



which often burned as well as flashed. Nor did he hold to one method, nor ever, that I heard, lecture save in the lecture-room or in the pulpit.

If you liked him, he had charm. Many men did not like him, and to them he was antipathetic, whether in conversation or otherwise. If you felt the fascination of his presence and of his intelligence, you felt it strongly. There was an English lady who saw much of him—she was often his hostess—and who took, I used to think, an almost humorous view of him. Intellectually speaking they had not, perhaps, many points of contact, but each was sympathetic to the other. I once remarked to her how often one came into the room and found them both silent. ‘Oh, yes,’ answered she, ‘nobody is so interesting as Jowett when he is silent.’ It was said with entire sincerity.

## II

There were people who accused Jowett of paying court to the great. It was even said that an offshoot from a family of high social position got on better at Balliol than a boy who had none. The best answer to this charge is that Balliol was, of all the colleges of the University of Oxford, pre-eminently the college of the poor. There was and is none other so much frequented by those of narrow means; none other where so much help is given to the needy student; none other whose head did so much personally, out of his own heart and his own pocket, for them; none other on whose honour-list figure the names of so many to whom college and university existence has been a long pecuniary struggle. He was generous of money and generous of his time, which he valued more than money. I doubt whether

he had a greater pleasure than that which came to him when he heard of the success of some pupil who owed to him his start in life or his chance of a university education.

The other point is more difficult to deal with, not on Jowett's account but from the nature of the subject, and perhaps also from the prejudice of some classes of American readers. There are Americans, as there are Englishmen, whose democracy is in social life of so fierce a kind as to tolerate no compromise with those whom we have been taught to call the classes. If a man have the misfortune to be born into a station of life which by mere birth bestows on him wealth or social rank, away with him. There can be no good in him or in his class. To men of this mind it will be idle to plead in behalf of Jowett, or in behalf of anybody who judges of men as men, and not as members of this or that section in society. To others this may be said: that it was his habit to accept the best, come they from what quarter they might. To care for the best is ever a good rule, and of the best there are many species of many different origins.

I suppose everybody will accept this view in the abstract. Jowett's critics themselves might, but their complaint of him began, as so often happens, when he began to put in practice the principle to which, as a principle or as a rule of conduct, nobody objected. Undoubtedly he liked to have about him men of the world, and of the best world, socially speaking. They and he had much in common, and each had something to impart to the other. His very shyness led him to covet the company of men and women who were free from shyness. They put him at his ease; whereas two shy persons act and react on each other, and the

timidity of each increases, and the awkwardness of each.

Their meeting brought Oxford and London together; and each gained something from the contact. Jowett was something more than a man of letters and very much more than a mere University Don, but he was not quite a man of the world in all respects. He lacked, as we have seen, ease of manner. He was sure of himself in essentials; not so sure in those social gifts which make the best social intercourse a fine art. Teacher as he was by trade, he knew how to value, and did value highly, those qualities and accomplishments which are not to be derived from books. He liked the charming deportment of well-bred men and women. He liked their serenity, their power of meeting everybody on even terms, their habit of doing and saying the right thing and of omitting to say the wrong thing. He saw very clearly that people who were at the top of the tree had not got there without some knowledge of the art of climbing; nor without courage, capacity of a high order, and character, which last is, after all, more than attainments.

He liked the tone which prevails among these fortunate persons; the simplicity, the total absence of pretence, or of affectation, or of self-assertion, which is in itself an unfailing test of social position. I dare say he liked women who were well dressed, and who knew how to wear their clothes and how to carry themselves—women, and men too, with soft voices well modulated, and with the accent which comes from long association with the best people, and from that only. If that be a reproach to him, let it be a reproach. Certain it is that he often gathered about him little parties of such people, and the Master's House at Balliol knew many a

celebrity as a guest. How should it be otherwise when half the really eminent men and women in England were his personal friends?

He has been described as opposed to freedom of thought. I do not think he was ever that. He was opposed to freedom of thought based on mere ignorance. To begin with, he thought for himself, and nobody ever accused him of thinking in the grooves which the Church had cut for him. What he disliked was the premature, or immature, scepticism of youth; or at any period of life when it was not according to knowledge. He considered that a man who meant to set up for himself in matters of religious or philosophic belief was bound to know the best of what had been said and thought on such subjects. He was not himself a great theologian or a great philosopher, but he had mastered the literature of both subjects. He expected others to do as much before they began to dogmatise. Nor had he a great liking for mere dogma in any form.

‘He had a strange mind,’ said the late Archbishop Tait of Jowett: ‘it is amusing to note how entirely uninterested he is on all the peculiar subjects now exercising the clerical mind. He lives in a region of critical and metaphysical theology, apart by himself.’ It is a very true account of him, so far as it goes, and it explains, in part—there are several other quite sufficient explanations—why the orthodox clergy always looked at Jowett askance. His was, in truth, a religious mind, but he concerned himself less with the forms than with the substance of things.

If he belonged to any party in the Church it was the Broad Church; the distinguishing character of which is not to be a party at all, but to embrace all parties. It is the other parties who refuse to be embraced. Because

of his breadth of view and of his tolerance of other views than his own, he was persecuted. Oxford persecuted him, after such mild fashion as the customs of the present day would permit. She would at one time have starved him if she could, but, finding she could not, grew ashamed of herself, and paid him his wages as professor, and then for four years submitted to be governed by the man whom she could not crush. To this day he has not been wholly forgiven for his paper in *Essays and Reviews*, and to this day the country parson, still a power at Oxford and elsewhere, holds up his hands in horror if you quote his famous, 'Interpret the Scriptures like any other book.'

Sir John Lubbock said of Jowett that he had made Plato an English classic. He did, at any rate, give to the English and American world the first English translation of Plato which was both scholarly and readable. He popularised Plato as nobody had done before. Never, said Emerson, are there at any one time more than a dozen men who really understand Plato; they are sufficient to keep the torch alight and to hand it on from generation to generation. Jowett has perhaps increased the number. Emerson, I imagine, would have been not a little astonished had he lived to know that three editions of a complete English Plato in expensive form had been published and sold within less than a quarter of a century.

The Greek tutors at Oxford, not all of whom loved Jowett, cavilled at his renderings, or at many of them, and denied to him a very critical knowledge of Greek. They said he had been helped by half a dozen men. He said so himself. No general fights a great battle without help from his staff. In the two later editions there are many corrections. They matter little. The

first is the real book ; those are the pages in which the two minds, those of the Greek and the Englishman, come closest together. Jowett is sometimes slipshod in his English, and more often colloquial and unconventional. He does not abstain from slang, nor from outlandish phrases, nor from speech which has in the mouth of the incomparable Athenian a strangely modern sound. In his effort to be easy he is sometimes flippant, and dialogue and transitions are one thing in Greek, quite another in English. There are other blemishes ; no great work was ever without them, but Jowett's Plato is none the less a great work, and will long remain a monument of literature.

### III

Jowett's place and rank as a writer of English have been discussed since his death. He has been called a great writer by writers who are deficient in that sense of proportion which is a condition both of good writing and of sound criticism. A great writer Jowett was not. He has, nevertheless, a style that is clear, manly, workmanlike, effective ; not always accurate. It is by no original work but by his translations, and most of all by his translation of Plato, that he will live in English literature. That of itself would remove him from the category of great writers. His introductions to the *Dialogues* are more remarkable for the substance than for the form of them. They are well written ; they are not supremely well written, but they are important and useful contributions to the literature of Plato.

When you come to the *Dialogues* themselves you find Jowett at his best. He is not even, and he is by

no means always classical; but the flow of the language is often so easy and sustained as to make the reader forget that it is a translation which he has before him. On the other hand, ease occasionally degenerates into rather slipshod colloquialism, and sometimes into inexcusable inaccuracies. You will chance upon such phrases as 'these sort,' 'mutual friends,' and upon the use of 'disagreeables' as a substantive. In the *Symposium* people have on 'no end of clothing,' and Alcibiades remarks that he 'had not the face' to detain Socrates. Anytus says in the *Meno*, 'Neither I nor any of my belongings has ever had anything to do with them.' Will and shall are confounded, as in the *Laches*, 'I know that I myself will be the sufferer.' So are 'would' and 'should,' Socrates in the *Phædrus* asking, 'Would I not regard the conversation of you and Lysias as a thing of higher import?' This odd use of the genitive of the personal pronoun recurs on the next page: 'He should meet the case of me.' In the *Laches* also may be found 'as much as ever you like,' which is slang, and the locution is repeated in the *Protagoras*, 'as soon as ever he is able to understand them.' It is slang also to say of a robber that he 'lifts' a temple.

Americanisms are not entirely wanting. Socrates observes in the *Phædo*: 'I reckon that no one who heard me now could accuse me of idle talking.' Plato is even made to talk not only American but French, as in the *Republic*, 'their necessity is *il faut vivre*,' and there are other instances. He does not reject such an expression as the 'tournure of the language.' Still stranger is the blend of French with Bunyan in such a phrase as 'the Messieurs' vain conceit,' where the eccentricity becomes grotesque. Doctor of Divinity as he is, he swears

now and then. Ctessippus gets angry and cries out, 'Strangers of Thuri, if politeness would allow me, I should say, "You be ——!"' He likes archaic forms, and writes: 'He thought temperance was doing things orderly and quietly.' Plato is even made to quote Dryden, 'Not one, but all mankind's epitome,' which is to be found in the *Republic*. The anachronism is not defensible, nor does Jowett trouble himself to defend any of these caprices. Whether he corrects them in the later editions I cannot say. For the reason I gave earlier, I cling to his first rendering: in it is to be found his genuine and authentic view of Plato.

The elevation of tone throughout the translation is, in spite of such slips as I have quoted, remarkable. It fails the Master sometimes; most unhappily of all in the one passage where it was most essential, the noble close of the *Apology*—

'The hour of departure has arrived, and we go our ways—I to die, and you to live. Which is better God only knows.'

Probably Jowett's ear played him false, musician though he was, and he was not aware of the flippancy of the concluding words. Church translates, 'Whether life or death is better is known to God, and to God only'; which, though inadequate, is tolerable enough.

This is, however, the exception. Jowett does for the most part lift himself, or is lifted by his author, to the height of the great argument with which he has to deal. Passage after passage may be quoted of which the diction is faultless, and not merely faultless but penetrated with the lofty spirit which animates the original. There are passages and pages which have such dignity and such beauty that, were they but his own in thought, they might be placed beside many a



masterpiece of English and suffer no harm by the comparison. The *Apology*, as a whole, has this sustained energy and splendour. The finer parts of the *Republic* have it; so has much of the *Phædo*, of the *Gorgias*, of the *Phædrus*. And it is no light matter to reproduce in English the effect of grace, of beauty, of rhythm, of the ordered and perfectly adjusted method of speech which prevails in the Greek. To him who through a long and difficult Greek author has done this, must ever belong no mean place among good writers of English.

He did not always seem to care whether he offended people who had given him no offence and no provocation. A distinguished American critic, now dead, sent him a long and eulogistic review of his translation of Plato, published in America, with a letter. Jowett answered him in two lines, thanking him for his 'amusing' notice. The writer whom he treated in this scornful way was not, perhaps, a profound Greek scholar, but he was a student of philosophy and very competent to deal with Jowett's work. But in that way did Jowett think proper to treat him.

So many Jowett stories have been published before and since his death that it is hard to be sure whether any is new. But here is one which, at any rate, I have never seen in print. There was a backward student at Balliol who, for failure to pass an examination in Greek, was 'sent down.' His mother, a good and devout mother, went to see the master. She explained to him what an excellent lad her son was; how filial and how pious. 'It is a hard experience for him, this disgrace,' said the old lady; 'but he will have the consolations of religion, and there is always one book to which he can turn.' Jowett eyed her and answered: 'Yes, madam, the Greek grammar. Good morning.'

It was Dr. Jowett's habit to wear on all occasions and at all times what is called full evening dress: black coat, waistcoat, and trousers, and white tie. When I say on all occasions, I mean that I never saw him in any other raiment than this. Probably he wore in the pulpit what other clergymen of the Church of England wear, and if he went to Court he must have gone in Court dress. But I have seen him as above described in Oxford, in London, and in the country, at all hours of the day. It was the costume in which he came down to breakfast in the country, and in which, surmounted by a soft black felt hat with a wide brim, he strolled about the grounds of the country houses where he happened to be staying. Such a costume in the daytime is in this country unusual, and attracted attention; of which Dr. Jowett, though a shy man, seemed altogether unaware. I have since heard that even in the pulpit, at Oxford, and when he preached in Westminster Abbey, he kept on his dress suit, and thought it sufficient to wear over it his Doctor's gown.

In the days when the 'Best Hundred Books' mania was rife I once asked Dr. Jowett for his opinion. He laughed at the idea of one man choosing another man's books for him. 'Besides,' added he, 'the number is too great for the purpose, so far as it is a useful purpose. A list of twenty-five is quite long enough, and might conceivably be of help to the readers for whom only such a catalogue could be meant.' I asked him if he had ever drawn one up. He said not, but would do it overnight. Next morning he handed it me. I asked if he was willing it should be published as his. He said he had no objection, and that I might take the list with me and do what I liked with it. I took it and mislaid it. Some day, perhaps, it will reappear.

High on this list stood Boswell's *Johnson*. It is significant of Jowett's range of intellectual interests that such a book should have been, in company with Plato and Aristotle and Thucydides, one of those which he thought most valuable to mankind. Dr. Birkbeck Hill, the latest and most accomplished of Boswell's editors, dedicates his edition to Jowett, 'who is not only "an acute and knowing critic," but also "Johnsonianissimus"; in grateful acknowledgment of the kindly interest that he has throughout taken in the progress of this work.' Dr. Hill's is, and is likely long to remain, the standard edition of Boswell. The dedication remains to the end a just testimony to him who inspired it. Jowett quoted rather seldom in conversation. He never cared for display, nor yet to compete. But if he quoted anybody, it was likely to be Boswell, or rather Johnson, for whose character and for whose talk he had an equal admiration.

## PROFESSOR TYNDALL

[LONDON, DECEMBER 1893]

IF you met Professor Tyndall for the first time, the impression he made on you was pre-eminently that of the Professor. Whether the meeting took place in the Royal Institution, of which he was so long the executive head, or in society, the impression was precisely the same. He had in the drawing-room the manner of the lecture-desk, just as he had in the lecture-desk the manner of good society. The two were independent and permanent. Before he withdrew from active life and from London I used to see him often, and sometimes in circumstances which left a vivid picture in one's mind. He was Resident Director of the Royal Institution in London from the death of Faraday, whose pupil and friend he was, down to his retirement in 1887.

It may also be said that during that period he *was* the Royal Institution. It was there that the most brilliant and not the least practical and useful part of his scientific work was done. Tyndall was an ideal Director. He was a first-rate man of science. He stood next after Huxley, who stood next after Darwin, in the Darwinian trilogy. His place in pure science was one of the very highest; but there were, and are, many men very eminent in pure science who would have been very unfit directors of the Royal Institution.

The establishment in Albemarle Street is a half-way house between science and society. It performs a great deal of scientific work of high value, quite independently of other than scientific influences. But it appeals to the public. It gives courses of lectures on a great variety of subjects. Its Friday evenings were at one time a favourite resort of one of the several sets of London society—the most cultivated set—and it was Tyndall who had made them so. Literature was not excluded. It was at the Royal Institution that Renan delivered his celebrated lectures on Marcus Aurelius, afterward published. Many celebrities, English and foreign, have there made their bows to the London public; or to so much of it as could get access to the very inconvenient, ill-ventilated, and dangerous lecture-room of the Institution. I used sometimes to say to Tyndall that I expected to be poisoned by the bad air, or burned to death on the narrow and crowded stairs. ‘You will die in a good cause,’ was all the answer to be extracted from him.

You could not get him to admit that anything was wrong with his darling Institution. He was proud of it, as, in spite of these and some other physical drawbacks, he had a right to be. He delighted in a brilliant audience and in a brilliant lecturer, and spared no pains to bring the two together. There was no shadow of jealousy. I think he knew well enough his own merits as a lecturer. Perhaps he courted comparisons; at any rate, he did not shrink from them. He got the best men he could. None of them, I think, or not more than one, was his superior in his own line; in one sense he was certainly superior to all. He was *facile princeps* in the difficult art of presenting delicate scientific experiments to an audience. He rehearsed his effects

as carefully as a stage-manager those of the theatre; and the lecture-room of the Royal Institution was a theatre. Nothing ever went wrong or missed fire. He took infinite pains to prevent any scientific or experimental miscarriage. People who cared nothing for science came to hear him because he spoke so well, and to see the performances because the performances were so good.

In truth, lecturing is with the English seldom a fine art, or studied as such. They are after the root of the matter, and do not always, or often, consider form or style. The lecturer seldom troubles himself about his voice or his delivery. Tyndall had a harsh voice, but he made it do its work. He spoke clearly. His sentences had a beginning, a middle, and an end. He was a born rhetorician and—what is perhaps more—a trained rhetorician. Of course he was not English; he was Irish, or at most Anglo-Irish; his ancestors having migrated two centuries ago from Gloucestershire to Ireland. But he and his forbears had during these two hundred years breathed the air of Ireland, and had become in many respects altogether Irish. You would never be in doubt when you heard Tyndall speak among what people his youth had been spent and his accent acquired.

Nor could you doubt that the fervour and force of his written and spoken style owed something, and owed much, to his Irish blood, or to Irish influences of some kind. He had the quickness of wit characteristic of the Irish, and not characteristic of the English. He had the want of humour, or of a sense of humour, also, which his countrymen so often want, at least in the conduct of life and in the affairs of this world. The want of it leads men to take exaggerated views of the importance

of things which concern themselves. Tyndall took himself very seriously; sometimes too seriously. Of course he had a right to. He knew the value of his work, and was perhaps sometimes a trifle too anxious that other men should know it too, and admit it. Sometimes they did not admit it because they saw that not to admit it teased him.

That was, however, only occasional. He had the just pride which most very distinguished men of science have; the desire to be judged by his peers, and by them alone; not regarding, or regarding little, the applause or censure of the incompetent. It was, indeed, the thoroughness and precision of his training and his methods in research which lay at the foundation of his public successes in the lecture-room. He understood the conditions of experiment. That seems a simple thing to say, but of how many men is it true, or of how many men of science in England who are not near the top? It came out in his dispute with Dr. Bastian about the development of germs, in a very early stage of the germ controversy. Dr. Bastian insisted that under no conditions could the propagation of these interesting organisms be prevented. He simply, said Tyndall, did not understand how to conduct the experiments. The precautions necessary to insure the exclusion of germs existing in the atmosphere were too minute for any but a first-class manipulator to carry out. Nay, after a long series of these experiments had been conducted privately in the Royal Institution itself by Tyndall, he satisfied himself that the whole atmosphere of the place had become impregnated with them, and he transferred his investigations elsewhere.

It was, perhaps, the very splendour of his success in popularising science which blinded people to the merit

of his purely scientific work and to the extent and value of his researches. Men of science have themselves done something to spread this view. They are apt to pay no tribute to the Graces. They care too little for accuracy of phrase or diction, though inaccuracy in matter of fact seems to them iniquitous. Darwin was not a writer; not a good writer in any sense, not clear or precise in the use of language. Tyndall was, and he was much more. So they called his style Corinthian, and the dull men, to whom dulness in others seems a condition of honest work, asked why anybody should presume to write better than the great High Priest of Evolution.

Tyndall could be interesting on a dry subject, or, as was said of Swift, write well about a broomstick, or, as was said of Dickens, less truly, about a three-legged stool. Like Carlyle, of whom he was a near friend, he had the secret of seeing things vividly and of making others see them vividly. Like Carlyle, also, he was a born fighter. He had perhaps a knack of getting into controversies, and was not always an easy man to work with. The public profited by this taste or this impulse, or whatever it was. He was admirable as a disputant; luminous, pointed, convincing; and not less convincing with a bad case than with a good one. A lawyer would, I suppose, consider that the highest praise of all.

He liked to mingle in other than scientific struggles. Late in life, and upon his retreat into the country, he took to writing letters on politics; in which he was not always happy. His politics were those of the Union, as are the politics of the great majority of the educated and intelligent in this country. But he had come to look on Mr. Gladstone with abhorrence, and it grew to be habitual with Tyndall to express this abhorrence in



language which is unusual among Englishmen in public. His invective diminished the force of his argument. Next to Mr. Gladstone, lighthouses excited him. He had a dispute with the lighthouse authorities, growing out of his position as adviser to the Board of Trade, and his adjectives shook the official world to its official centre.

With all this, he had the kindest and most generous nature. He was always befriending people; always liberal in money matters; sacrificing pay and emolument sooner than put up for a moment with what he thought injustice to himself or others. A great fortune was easily within his reach; he had just that aptitude for applied science, or for putting the secrets of science to practical and profitable uses, for which there is in these days an unlimited demand and an illimitable reward. He preferred to work on in the field of pure science. You cannot have forgotten that he gave the profits of his American tour, some \$13,000, to certain American universities for the benefit of students engaged in scientific research. He deserves all the tributes you are likely to pay him, and more. For he deserves that kind of homage which is due to purity of character and of aim; to high-minded views, to unselfishness, to gallantry, and to a sense of honour as stainless as the Alpine snows which he loved.

## II

I went to Belfast in 1874 to hear Dr. Tyndall's address as President of the British Association for the Advancement of Science. Those were the days when the British Association had an importance much greater than it has since been able to maintain. Its position,

with reference both to the world of science and the world at large, or the intellectual portion of it, was such that the most eminent men of science were glad to take part in its proceedings. English savants looked to the yearly Presidential address as a kind of authentic statement in behalf of science. Sometimes it was a summary of the year's work, sometimes it dealt with the latest or greatest of the new doctrines or newly developed principles, as in Sir William Grove's celebrated address at Liverpool on the Conservation of Energy. Sometimes the President for the year chose to be individual, and to put forth his own views on some hotly controverted point. The sectional meetings of Association were also, not infrequently, of real scientific interest. Professor Huxley himself read papers to the sections, and many men hardly less eminent than Professor Huxley. In short, the platform of the British Association was then a pulpit with a sounding-board, and nobody need wish a better spot from which to issue a lay encyclical, *urbi et orbi*.

Professor Tyndall's address at Belfast was perhaps the most—I do not say sensational, but the most direct appeal ever made by a President of the Association to the lettered and thoughtful public. It was delivered in a Presbyterian capital, to a crowded audience, gathered from all parts of the kingdom. It was reported in full, and instantly became a topic of discussion and, of course, of controversy. I remember thinking as I listened that I was present on one of those occasions which mark epochs. Next morning I went to see Professor Tyndall. I said to him—

‘Your address seems to me the announcement of a revolution.’

‘What do you mean by revolution?’

‘I mean a revolution in the relations between the world of science and the rest of the world ; and in the attitude of each to the other, and in the influence of scientific thought upon the general thought of the best people.’

‘Well,’ he answered, ‘you have clearly perceived the aim of it. What the effect will be is another matter.’

And he went on to say that he expected to be attacked, misrepresented, condemned, and probably told that he was undermining the religious basis of society. ‘But to that we are all used.’ Much of what he foresaw did in fact happen. He was denounced as a materialist and an agnostic—neither of them at that time words of good import, nor is materialist now, though agnostic has long been used otherwise than as a term of reproach. He thought it worth while, so unrelenting was the attack, to set forth later at Birmingham some of the chief misconceptions of his opponents, and to vindicate his own position, and even his own good faith. Explanations are commonly a mistake, and Tyndall’s was hardly an exception to the rule. But as to the importance of the address and its revolutionary character, there was no mistake. I have just turned to the chief lay authority in all such matters to see what was said of it after twenty years almost had passed, and I find this :

‘It may be taken as the first clear and unmistakable public utterance as to the aims of modern science, and as to the bearings of the doctrine of evolution on the beliefs that have influenced humanity from the beginning.’

Then, after a reference to the controversy that arose, the writer says, and says most truly :

‘The address might be delivered now without creating any excitement at all. Tyndall hardly went further than the present Bishop of London does in his well-

known work on *Science and Religion*, published a few years ago.'

The comparison is an instructive one, because the present Bishop of London, Dr. Temple, has shown himself at critical moments of his career anxious to conform to the general expectation of his Church, and even of the public, with reference to questions which touched on points of orthodoxy. He was one of the authors of *Essays and Reviews*, and he saw reason to recant the very moderate expressions of ecclesiastical liberalism into which he then fell. He has since been known, and is known down to the present day, as a safe theologian. The spirit of caution attends him. If there be no real difference between the Bishop of London's present views on science and religion and those which Dr. Tyndall proclaimed at Belfast, the period of harmony is clearly approaching. Dr. Temple's authority is not high; it is because he is the impersonation of the spirit of prudent commonplace that his testimony is valuable. But let any student in America who cares for the intellectual history of this generation read over Tyndall's Belfast address. He will not find it hard reading, but easy, and not merely easy but fascinating. Tyndall had put forth his whole strength. His style, which was always copious and full of colour, is here at its best. He rises to his theme. The audience which heard him was, at moments, electrified. So will the reader be, even now, and if he does not feel that at this day the doctrine of the address is novel, he has only to put himself in the position of those who heard and read it in 1874, to appreciate the tremendous effect of this application of the Natural Law to the Spiritual World.

In this time of the iconoclast and the democrat, it may be worth remarking that Tyndall was born in the

masses, and that his place in the classes was one which he made for himself. His father 'belonged to the poorest class of tradesmen,' but was none the less a man of energy and intellect. He gave his son an education at school and at home; one perhaps as useful as the other. Civil engineering was to have been young Tyndall's profession, and he did work at it for a while. The influence of German scientific teaching and the influence of Faraday turned him to pure science, and kept him there. It is mentioned vaguely that he once thought of settling in America. For America read Canada. If I remember rightly the story I have heard Tyndall tell, he was a candidate for a professorship in some Canadian college, but failed to get the appointment. His acquaintance with Faraday began casually enough, Tyndall taking a scientific paper to the great chemist, who saw the value both of the paper and of its author, and soon secured for him a professorship of physics in the Royal Institution. And thus it was that the world gained what Toronto lost.

The climbers of the Alps, who are for the most part enthusiasts if not fanatics, claim Tyndall as one of themselves. He was, indeed, a mountaineer and a good one; his wiry, lean, hard, sinewy, and long-enduring frame just fitting him for the exploits and perils of Alpine life. But he was much more than that; much more than a pedestrian with the spirit of adventure. The Alps were to him a field of scientific exploration and investigation. While he delighted in difficult and dangerous ascents, he never made one, I imagine, in which he did not study the scientific problems connected with ice.

It is easy to face danger and death under the excitement of conquering new peaks, or rivalling old feats.

Tyndall did that, but he faced them just as coolly when studying the *mer de glace* in the winter. The *mer de glace* is the happy hunting-ground of Cook's tourists for half a day in the summer, and most of them approach it on donkeys. Tyndall, in the depths of an exceptional winter, lived on it and near it for many days, amid hardships and difficulties that not many men have faced, for the sake of ascertaining the rate of movement of a glacier. However, his attacks on the Matterhorn and his solitary ascent of Monte Rosa are probably the achievements on which the Alpine Club would set a higher value than on any scientific work whatever.

He used to experiment not only on Nature, but on himself. I once asked him what food he took on the mountains. He said the guides commonly consumed a mixture of butter and honey, which they had found supplied, for long excursions, in the most portable form, the greatest amount of heat and nourishment. But for himself he liked cakes of chocolate best, and these he used to eat every two hours while climbing. His love for the Alps was more than scientific, and more than mere mountaineering, or than both together. It was a passion, and they were his home every summer during the last twenty years or so of his life. He had a cottage on the Bel Alp to which he went regularly, and when he chose a country home in England he chose Hindhead, nearly 1000 feet above the level of the sea. He understood, as few men in this fog-laden and mist-enshrouded isle seem to understand, the value of pure, dry, fresh air. It was to him a condition of intellectual vitality. He could work for a time without it, as every Londoner does and must, but he sought it with eagerness as often as he could escape from town.

The tragedy of Tyndall's death calls for no comment, but only for sympathy, and for sympathy above all with the wife who was the blameless author of it. There are memories of the Royal Institution which associate themselves with her as well as with him. The lecture audiences always consisted in part of personal friends, and these were often asked upstairs to the rooms which were the London home of the Tyndalls. There it was, as on other social occasions, that one of the charming sides of Tyndall's nature came out. He was sympathetic to an extraordinary degree, kindly in manner, with a range of conversation that was as remarkable as its ease. Anything that interested him at all interested him keenly, and his interests were hers. Dr. Buzzard, who was the pupil, the friend, and the physician of Tyndall, said, in answer to a question at the coroner's inquest :

'The relationship between Professor Tyndall and Mrs. Tyndall was one of remarkable affection and devotion ; I think, in the course of a very long experience, I have never seen the devotion which Mrs. Tyndall showed to her husband surpassed.'

Dr. Buzzard's evidence was not less emphatic on another point. Answering a question whether Dr. Tyndall, who for some years had suffered from insomnia and overwork, had any desire to shorten his life, he answered : 'None whatever. On the contrary, he was a man who fought against death with an extraordinary amount of resolution, and he was keenly anxious to live.' The same thing may be said, not only of his wish to live, but of his conduct of life. He fought against all forms of death, and all forms of imperfect or sluggish life, with extraordinary resolution ; against error, against ignorance, against dishonour, against the least disloyalty to the highest ideal.

## SIR EDWARD BURNE-JONES

[LONDON, FEBRUARY 1894]

### I

‘SIR EDWARD BURNE-JONES, Bart., ex-A.R.A.’—altogether an odd way of designating an eminent artist, now in his sixty-first year. It becomes the more odd when you consider who and what Sir Edward is, and what his career has been. There are more reasons than one why people are surprised by his acceptance of this title; and are surprised also by the offer of it. Who offered it? query those who like to know the inside history of things. Mr. Gladstone? His interest in art has never been supposed to be very deep, nor his acquaintance very wide with any art but the accepted and conventional forms of it. I think no one of his colleagues is widely known as a connoisseur of painting, or even as a lover of it, unless perhaps Lord Rosebery, and his interest is largely historical. Sir William Harcourt, Mr. John Morley, Lord Spencer, Mr. Fowler of Wolverhampton, Lord Kimberley—which of these estimable gentlemen is the patron of Mr. Burne-Jones? It is permissible still to call him Mr. Burne-Jones. Until the completion of the ceremonies which make him a full-fledged baronet, his older and simpler name is the true one. Indeed, if he have an eminent patron—a word which he would reject—in politics, it is no



member of the Gladstonian Cabinet or of the Gladstonian party. It is Mr. Arthur Balfour, now the possessor of the lovely Brier Rose series of pictures ; and Mr. Arthur Balfour, leader of Her Majesty's Opposition, can hardly be supposed to have much influence in the counsels of the party he steadfastly opposes. Nor can Lord Wharncliffe, who owns the fine King Cophetua.

If, however, you consider another side of the matter, the puzzle becomes perhaps slightly less puzzling. Mr. Burne-Jones, though not a politician, has strong political sentiments and feelings ; possibly even convictions. He is a Home-Ruler, and he is one of those Radicals whose Radicalism is first cousin to Socialism, or to that form of it which now and then, in minds not very much accustomed to affairs, springs from sympathy with suffering and from a feeling that large classes of men and women have a hard life in this world. Amiable persons of that stamp often seem ready to catch at any political nostrum which promises a remedy for such a state of things. Mr. Burne-Jones is the dear and intimate friend of men whose names are much more widely known in the world of affairs than his own, and of one or two who have an almost sinister celebrity by reason of their ill-considered enthusiasm for some very doubtful causes ; Mr. William Morris, for one. Does that throw any light on the present appointment ? I cannot say, and I do not know that it much matters.

What matters is that on personal grounds and on art grounds Mr. Burne-Jones deserves all the honour that has been bestowed on him. It may not be quite the kind of honour one would have liked to see him receive. Mr. Watts declined it when the same was offered to him ; not, I think, for the first time. Yet Mr. Watts

is less remote from the merely conventional than Mr. Burne-Jones is. Mr. Watts, to begin with, is an R.A., and has been in full communion with that great company of painters—a word which includes, for academical purposes, both those who can paint and those who cannot—for twenty-six years. He has recognised the State as having concern with art by the gift, or rather by the promised bequest, of one of the finest collections in existence of modern pictures; a considerable part of the work of his own life, the money value of which would be expressed in large figures. His house and studio in Holland Park have long been the resort of the cultivated and, to some extent, of the fashionable world. His portrait-painting has brought him into relations with many men eminent in public—that is, in political as well as literary or ecclesiastical—life. He has painted fair women and brave men. He has never lost sight of the public as a body to whom in the long run he was responsible as an artist.

Hardly any of these things are true of Mr. Burne-Jones. His whole art life has been a protest. He has stood aloof from the world. He has looked to no man and to no body of men as a teacher or leader. To Rossetti, perhaps, in some degree, for inspiration or for suggestion, but he is a painter so immensely superior to Rossetti that it seems absurd to conceive of him as standing, for any purpose, to Rossetti in the attitude of a pupil. Rossetti was a man of a highly poetical nature, who turned to art as a medium of expression for certain poetical conceptions for which he did not think verse best suited. But he never took the trouble to master the technique of painting. What people value in Rossetti's pictures is not the beauty of their execution, but the beauty and originality of the thought he

has tried to transfer to canvas. Never once, perhaps, was the effort a complete success ; and perhaps never an entire failure.

Far otherwise was Mr. Burne-Jones's theory of art. He began by learning the alphabet and the grammar of it. He became a consummate draughtsman. He studied design as a science, and his mastery over it is not less complete than that of a great chemist over the science of chemistry. He was a born colourist ; albeit he often indulges in schemes of colour which seem fantastic, just as he draws human figures which, to the eye untutored in his peculiar methods, seem unduly elongated. But if these be errors, they are not the errors of ignorance, they are wilful, and it is not to be doubted that, from his own point of view, they are defensible. Every man's stock of courage, however, is limited, and I never heard of anybody who ventured to ask Mr. Burne-Jones why he sometimes chose to create his women seven feet high, or why the living flesh should assume the livid hue of the corpse. I hardly dare to hint that it is so, even in this private and confidential way. When such things are said—at least now—they are said in whispers. Aforetime they used to be announced in all the brutality of print.

There was a long period during which Mr. Burne-Jones was to the Gentile only another name for foolishness. He was misunderstood, neglected, ridiculed, by all but a few. Before the earlier days of the now extinct Grosvenor Gallery, he was hardly known save to the very elect, by which I mean that holy band who love art for art's sake and not for fashion's sake, or as a topic of conversation at difficult dinners, or as a livelihood to the artist and a fortune to the dealer. Now and then he burst on the world with a canvas which the

veriest Philistine could not but admire, like the incomparable 'Chant d'Amour.' He who has not seen that picture knows not how near a modern has approached to the gorgeousness of the Venetian school in its most luxuriant moment—how near to Giorgione himself. A dozen others might be named, not unworthy to hang beside it, though I think Mr. Burne-Jones himself would prefer that most of them should be hung at a little distance.

But he had, and has, more than all this; more than draughtsmanship and craftsmanship, more than design and colour, more even than that poetic feeling and poetic gift which suffused and illuminated his best work. He has individuality and the power of impressing it on the painted canvas, and a vigour which seem as inexhaustible as it is various. You were never in any doubt when you stood before one of his pictures—at any rate, before one of the most important—whose were the brain and hand which had produced it. You did not need to look in the corner for the name. It was stamped Burne-Jones all over. He had in the beginning, and maintained through years of neglect or of imperfect appreciation, a just confidence in his own powers. There is probably no higher test of genius; only the genius must be real and the confidence, like wisdom, justified of her children; that is, by the produced and completed works of the justly confident artist. He was an idealist who knew how to give to idealism the firm consistency without which art remains little more than an inspiration. He had industry, and shrunk from no toil. His patience never wore out. There never was a moment—there is no trace of it in any part of the great body of his painting—when he dreamed of surrender. Whether he believed the public would come round to him I know

not. He certainly never thought of going over to the public, or of accepting any standard or canon of art which was not his own.

In due time the public did surrender. They accepted with a certain pathetic meekness what they could not entirely understand, and there was quite enough which was intelligible to them to vindicate their new admiration to themselves. Perhaps Manchester, with its astonishing exhibition of Victorian Art, led the way. There was, at any rate, nobody who stood that rather trying test better than Mr. Burne-Jones; perhaps none so well. A great Manchester dealer, who is also a great London dealer, was quick enough to perceive this new movement in the public mind—indeed the rapidity of the movement of the public mind was never dizzying—and in fact to anticipate it. He entered into relations with this new-old artist; of which the result, or one result, was that series of enchanting pictures I referred to above, the Brier Rose, and the exhibition of them, not in London or Manchester only, but in many other parts of England.

The Royal Academy itself perceived that Mr. Burne-Jones was likely to acquire such a place in public esteem as would give new force to the question, Why is this admirable artist not in the Academy, and what does the Academy exist for if not to recognise excellence in art? So, very grudgingly, this art-union—I do not say trade-union—elected him an Associate in 1885. He remained an Associate seven or eight years; then resigned. The step was, I believe, without precedent, but the reason for it not far to seek. Inferior men were chosen into full membership over his head, and he had no mind to remain all his life in a probational and subordinate rank. He consulted his own dignity

and the true interests of art by withdrawing. Honours of a different kind were not wanting to him. Oxford had made him a D.C.L. as long ago as 1881, and Exeter College elected him to an Honorary Fellowship, and Birmingham had made him President of her Royal Society of Artists.

Finally came, only last year, the exhibition at the New Gallery of his collected works, and the conquest was complete. It is the more remarkable because of the isolation and the remoteness of the artist's art. It is not modern, it has no direct relation to modern life. It deals with the land of romance, of tradition, of legend, of poetic imagination, of fantasy. It is a creation, not a reproduction, and these delicate conceptions are offered to the most prosaic age of the most prosaic and practical people who ever lived, and at last are accepted. They are bought and sold at great prices, and the prosaic purchaser, or the supreme political representative of him, when he casts about him for the most suitable form of recognition for this art-historian of fairy-land, can think of nothing so suitable as a baronetcy. It is a singular world.

## II

It is now said that Sir Edward Burne-Jones's baronetcy, like the one proposed to Mr. Watts, went begging for a while. Mr. Burne-Jones had the opportunity of becoming Sir Edward Burne-Jones so long ago as last summer. Mr. Gladstone offered him a baronetcy at that time, and he declined it. He felt that there was a sort of incongruity between his art and the tribute to it. Carlyle felt the same thing about his literature when Lord Beaconsfield dangled a Grand

Cross of the Bath before the eyes of the grim old Scot. He was enchanted with the compliment, as his letter showed, but he refused it. No doubt he seemed to himself, and to others, a greater man as plain Thomas Carlyle, writer of books, than as Sir Thomas Carlyle, G.C.B. And there was always a doubt whether Tennyson did well to merge the Poet in the Peer. He might have taken '*Fluctuat nec mergitur*' for his motto, for the poet did keep his head above water, or above what the New Radical now delights to call the Beerage.

I think I doubted the other day whence came the impulse which lifted Mr. Burne-Jones into Sir Edward. I am now told it was Mr. Gladstone. He and Sir Edward are, it appears, friends, and each has an admiration for the other. There is no marvel in that. Mr. Gladstone's interest in art may not be profound, but it exists. It has always been doubtful whether there is any subject in which he is not interested. If any unconventional art appealed to him, it might well be that of Sir Edward Burne-Jones, with its purity, its religious asceticism, its spirituality. At any rate he likes the artist and the artist likes him. Sir Edward, unlike some of his brethren of the brush, cares for other things than his art. He is widely read, and I always thought he might have made a name in literature had he not preferred to make one by painting. Preference it was not, I imagine. Art does not live by preferences, but by the irresistible impulse of a nature which finds there, and not elsewhere, its true expression. It is not an act of will. The man who chooses, who says to himself after deliberation, 'I will not be a lawyer nor a doctor, but a painter'—that man is a bad painter to the end, or no painter at all. A bird does not say to itself after deliberation, 'I will not walk, but fly.'

It cannot do otherwise, nor can the artist. To him, as to the bird, Nature has granted wings, and use them he must.

But a baronet with wings—is there, or is there not an incongruity? Yet I never heard that Sir John Millais or Sir Frederick Leighton painted worse pictures after they had been, as a French paper would have it, ‘ennobled.’ Nor will Sir Edward Burne-Jones. If he changed his mind, family influences seem to have had something to do with it. He has a son who is on terms of some acquaintance with Lord Salisbury. Mr. Arthur Balfour, whom the father consulted, advised him to accept. So it may be assumed that in the bestowal and acceptance of this compliment party politics had no place nor influence. It is an odd blending of influences and personalities which have had each some share in this latest addition to the already tolerably long list of English Baronets—Mr. Gladstone, Lord Salisbury, Mr. Balfour, young Mr. Phil Burne-Jones, himself a painter; Dante Rossetti, in his grave, but yet living in the person of his most distinguished disciple; and finally, Sir Edward Burne-Jones himself. There are no less than seven hundred and fifty-five Baronets of England and of the United Kingdom, ninety-two Baronets of Scotland, and sixty-four Baronets of Ireland.

The well-deserved distinction conferred on Mr. Burne-Jones has given rise, as might be expected, to cavils. If Mr. Burne-Jones is to become Sir Edward Burne-Jones, Bart., why is no similar honour offered to some of his ex-colleagues of the Royal Academy? ask some of the admirers of some of these eminent artists. Why not Mr. Alma Tadema, or Mr. Hook, or Mr. Orchardson? No doubt some of them are worthy of all honour,



yet questions of this kind are always indiscreet. They give rise to other questions. They give rise, for example, to this other question : How many Royal Academicians might be made baronets, or made anything, with the general assent, either of the public or of the art world ? It reminds one of the familiar challenge in France to name the members of the French Academy, or to explain why the majority of them are Academicians. It is a challenge seldom accepted, never well met.

The Royal Academy holds a relation to British Art analogous to that which the French Academy holds to the literature of France. Membership of it implies, theoretically, excellence in some form of art. Perhaps it is hardly fair to ask an American audience what standard of excellence is implied or upheld by certain names which, even in England, are thought to confer little honour upon this honourable body. Some of them are hardly known outside England, or outside London, or even outside Burlington House. The reputation of the Academy depends, however, not upon its least good, but upon its best members. Of these, Sir Frederick Leighton, the president, and Sir John Millais are already baronets. Mr. Watts, as we know, was offered the same title at the same time as Mr. Burne-Jones, and declined it ; for the second or third time. I have named three others as entitled by general consent to some such honour. Among the three Mr. Alma Tadema is, as a painter, pre-eminent.

But if the inquiry had to be pushed, who is to be named next ? How many more are there who could be named at all without provoking a derisive protest ? Thus far, we have got six names out of forty. It is not a large proportion. To select the least fit would be neither agreeable nor profitable. What one would

like to know is whether, out of the remainder of thirty-four, other candidates could be produced, and if so, who? I mean, of course, candidates who would not make the proposer look foolish. There are certain names which have long been thought to add no lustre to the Academy; men of perfectly respectable character, good fathers of families, punctual in the payment of rates and taxes, full of the most excellent intentions even with respect to the art of painting, but unhappily unable to paint or do other work in the domain of art, and therefore out of place in the Royal Academy. The most enthusiastic believer in this institution would not recommend these gentlemen for any such tribute as that which Mr. Burne-Jones has received, who is not an Academician at all. Does the Government then mean to cast a reflection on the Academy? I apprehend not. But what they have done for Mr. Burne-Jones is a sort of reminder to this distinguished body, that, as at present constituted, it does not exhaust the possibilities of art in the United Kingdom.

Beyond doubt it would be a misfortune if the Academy did exhaust them; if British art and British art-education had nowhere else to look than Burlington House. Anybody who remembers what the state of both was before the pre-Raphaelite movement, or even before the foundation of the Grosvenor Gallery, will understand what that means. The state of things was deplorable; the whole tendency of things was deplorable. The one great influence of the early half-century, Constable, was dead. He had left no mantle behind him, and there were no shoulders it would fit. If the primacy of art had ever belonged to England, it had passed away. Turner not only was not a great influence, he had not yet obtained the limited recognition

which came to him afterward. Mr. Ruskin's writings were still but the voice of the Oxford Graduate crying in the wilderness. Ultimately they converted a considerable portion of the British public, but they had no great vogue abroad and they have remained a closed book to the Academy. Holman Hunt and Rossetti and Millais, before Millais entered upon the more profitable part of his career, were outsiders, and all but Millais remained outsiders. The Academicians set their faces like flint against novelties; whether the novelties were native or imported. The glories of the French school, above all of the modern French landscape-painters, of whom many were the direct descendants of Constable, passed unperceived in Piccadilly, or in Trafalgar Square. If they were perceived, they were resisted; sometimes openly scouted, and at all times treated as foreign, and therefore safely to be neglected.

Look at the dates in Millais's case. His art life began at eleven years of age. He exhibited at the Academy when he was seventeen, in 1846. His association with Dante Rossetti and Holman Hunt lasted some ten years. He was chosen an Associate of the Royal Academy in 1853. He remained an Associate for eleven years, and it was not till 1864 that he was finally received into full membership. In the interval, says one of his biographers, he had 'emancipated himself,' and when his collected works were exhibited at the Grosvenor Gallery in 1887, the exhibition was meant to show, says this academical critic, how he had shaken off the trammels of Pre-Raphaelitism. Well, Pre-Raphaelitism was a protest, and had perhaps done its work. But the point to be noticed in connection with the Academy is plain. It was only by renouncing

his first enthusiasms, and by recanting what the Academy considered heresies, that the doors opened to a man who was confessedly one of the most original and accomplished artists of his time—at that time and for a good while after.

The men who were in the ascendant were the painters of Derby Days and Railway Stations like Frith, or the historiographers of the hunting-field, like the President, Sir Francis Grant. They continued in control down to the election of Sir Frederick Leighton as President in 1878. Then a new epoch was foretold. No man who knows what Sir Frederick Leighton's abilities and accomplishments and loyalty really are, will disparage his efforts or detract from the credit due to the work he has achieved as President. It is sufficient to say that he has not done all that was expected of him, nor all that he himself hoped to do. Traditions were too strong for him. The commercial interests of the Academy and of its members were too strong. The teaching of the Academy was improved in some technical points, but it remained in substance and tendency what it was before. The elections were still governed by considerations alien from art. Abuses survived. The privileges of the Academician were not curtailed. Mr. Horsley and Mr. Herbert, Mr. Wells and Mr. Sant and Mr. Yeames were still entitled to their eight pictures on the line. The new men with new methods might still paint, and the Hanging Committee could be relied on to sky them with unswerving impartiality. The theory of the private and independent character of the Academy was maintained, and is maintained to this day; a club or private society supported by its own resources and supporting its own schools in the same way.

The theory is correct: the inference that the Academy has no responsibilities to the State or to the public is extremely incorrect, but it is still advanced, and when public opinion, at a given moment, proves too strong for it, and a semblance of concession is thought expedient, and Mr. Burne-Jones, for example, is offered a back seat, the majority know that he can be kept there, and they do keep him there, and then are scandalised if he takes himself off. And they are scandalised still more when they hear of his being selected for titular distinction, recommended by the Prime Minister to the Queen, and by the Queen offered a rank which, whatever you may think of it, but one other Academician, the President excepted, has been thought worthy to hold.

## LORD ROSEBERY

[LONDON, MARCH 1894.]

### I

THE building up of the Rosebery legend has already begun. There is naturally a great curiosity to know all that can be known about the new Prime Minister. It is the greater because his public life has of late years been surrounded with a certain reserve. He has fulfilled his own and Lord Salisbury's idea of the Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs. He has been dumb, or almost dumb. He has made one great speech in the House of Lords and some lesser ones, but he has hardly been seen on the public platform. He has had little to say, except with a pen in his hand, on the burning questions of the hour. He has devoted himself to foreign policy, and the foreign policy of Great Britain is enough, and more than enough, to absorb the energies of any one man. This very absorption, though not quite complete, has withdrawn him from his taskmaster's eye; his taskmaster being, of course, the British public. And so the taskmaster, by help of his other faithful servants, the newspapers, indemnifies himself as best he can by constructing a legend. They all want to know more than they do, not merely about the Minister, whose record and achievements are open

to everybody, but about the man. Hence the 'character-sketches,' which seem to me mostly well-meant and good-natured caricatures. Nothing is more remarkable than the way in which stories attach themselves to a particular person for which there is little or no foundation in fact. It is the body of these stories which make up what I call the legend. And since nothing travels so fast or so far or lasts so long as error, it may be worth while to set right two or three specimen errors.

One of these character artists will have it that Lord Rosebery 'knows his Horace by heart.' This seems meant to hand on an ancient tradition. Many of the Prime Ministers of England have been classical scholars. Mr. Gladstone was one of the best, and it is but the other day somebody was saying that he was going to translate the whole of Horace, or perhaps only the whole of the Odes. The pathetic reason was given that this work would make no demand on his eyes. He knew his Horace by heart, as he knows his Homer, in a sense, by heart. Asked once how well he knew it, he answered that if you began with a line at the top of any page, he could complete the page from memory. But of classical learning his successor has very little. He was at Christchurch, Oxford, during the classical period, but Christchurch has never been conspicuous as a 'reading' college, and Lord Dalmeny, as he then was, did not set himself very strenuously against the fashion or custom of idleness. Many a man, indeed, learns his Horace by heart who is no scholar, and some of them keep up the knowledge. He has ever been pre-eminently the poet of the man of the world. I doubt whether Lord Rosebery is of this number. Certainly, if he has any such knowledge he rather hides it under a bushel, modestly.

He is presented to the world as a poet. There exists, says one of his portrait-eulogists, at least one unpublished poem by him which may see the light some day. There exist, I do not doubt, or have existed, more poems than one, or copies of verses, for which the world, I think, will wait a long time. No man knows better than Lord Rosebery the limitations of his powers. He has written verses for his own amusement and for that of his friends. I have seen him sit down to a table in the drawing-room after dinner, a large company of people talking and playing games, and amid the soft tumult of all these distractions and of his duties as host, produce some notepaper sheets of what are called or used to be called occasional verses. They were turned out as fast as his pen could travel on the paper, metre and rhymes all correct. His friends read them if they liked. They were excellent of their kind, and the improvisation added to their merit. I doubt whether they were preserved. I am sure they will not be published. Lord Rosebery, who is one of the best of readers, reads very little poetry. That fact alone might dispel the notion that he has any ambition to figure as a poet.

His reading is before all things historical, and it is the political and diplomatic history of England and Scotland—Ireland, also, of late years—which has most occupied him. His knowledge is, on those subjects and in those directions, wide and accurate. If it be possible for accuracy in matters of fact, of dates, of events, to be a foible, it is a foible with him, and he is sometimes impatient of inaccuracy in others; an impatience which he carefully suppresses. This reading began long ago; began in the days when racing was believed to occupy his mind much more than reading. One of his earlier friends, who knew him long



before I did, told me years ago that Lord Rosebery had, as it were, made at that time a secret of the studious side of his life. He read early and late; long before his comrades of those days were up, and long after they had gone to bed. It may be conjectured that even then he had conceived a high ambition, and was silently fitting himself for the part he meant to play by and by. If you have seen much of him you will have observed that he makes it a rule never to talk to others of subjects out of their range, or apart from their known interests and habits. That of itself might explain the imperfect knowledge which his earlier associates, or most of them, had of these solid studies.

The use he has made of them became evident later. I defer what I have to say of his public life, but I will remark here that in every branch of it, whether parliamentary or municipal, whether in the House of Lords or on the platform, or in that important part of public life which consists in private intercourse with other men, he has been distinguished by the fulness and precision of his acquired knowledge. That was the fruit which these early and ever-continued studies bore. Later, they broadened and varied. When he became, or before he first became Foreign Minister, they spread over the Continent. They included a familiar acquaintance with the personages and personal history of all the reigning families of Europe, of all their Ministers, of all those who had to do with affairs abroad. You could consult him as you would consult a Gotha Almanac, and with at least equal certainty of being rightly informed. That is a kind of information which few Englishmen possess; even among the few to whom the political history of the Continent and its diplomatic intricacies are known.

These latter, every Foreign Minister in England is supposed to master. Some do and some do not. When the supposition is extended to Prime Ministers—as it must be, since every Prime Minister is to a certain extent his own Foreign Minister—it becomes still more dubious. Mr. Gladstone, who came as near as most men to omniscience, had a blank side to his mind where the world that lay outside the field of English interests was concerned. On second thoughts, I will retract that. It was not blank, but his mind was, on that class of subjects, less overflowing with miscellaneous facts than on most others. Of views, however, there never was a deficiency.

It was characteristic of Lord Rosebery that he never affected to know what he did not know, nor shrunk from asking even elementary questions. There is a story which has afforded, and still affords, delight to the great permanent staff of the Foreign Office. One of Lord Rosebery's first acts as Foreign Minister was to send for Sir Edward Hertslet, the eminent chief of the Treaty Department, and ask him point blank: 'What is a protocol?' He knew, of course, what a protocol is, but what he wanted was a scientific account of it from the highest authority; or perhaps something which would throw light on a particular protocol then under consideration. Be the reason of the question what it might, he was certainly the first parliamentary chief of the Foreign Office who had ever put such a question.

But I have wandered further than I meant into the public domain, and I return for a moment to another mistaken statement about Lord Rosebery in his private character. Do not blame me if I deal with such topics. I am but following English writers, and you do not need to be told that the sense of decorum is in the English

writer much more highly developed than in the mere American. Here are three statements: He is not a statesman; he is a timid horseman; he does not care much about shooting—all wrong. If the word sportsman has any generic signification in this country, it means a racing man; and Lord Rosebery, who was for many years on the turf and then left it, has returned to his early pursuit, and is at this moment the owner of the first favourite for the Derby, of which more anon. He is not a timid but a careless horseman, with a habit of thinking when in the saddle about other subjects than the performance of the animal under him. Every horseman knows how dangerous that is, and Lord Rosebery has paid dear for this peculiarity, which implies, not timidity, but an undue indifference to his own safety.

As to shooting, few men are more keen about it, and there are few better or quicker shots. He preserves on a large scale both at Dalmeny and at Mentmore. I have seen him at Mentmore kill 634 rabbits to his own gun within three hours, or a little more. This performance began at about half-past eleven in the morning, continued till luncheon, was resumed after luncheon, and came to an end within about an hour after that. For a man who does not care about shooting it would be a miraculous exploit. It implies, of course, natural gifts and much practice. It would be more correct to say that the killing was done, not to his own gun, but to his own three guns, as he had two loaders; and there was, of course, the usual regiment of beaters. Perhaps these are samples enough of the well-meant mistakes which have already done something to substitute an imaginary for the real man, and we may let the legend for the present take care of itself.

## II

There is good Conservative authority for the statement that, notwithstanding Mr. Gladstone's disappearance, England is likely to enjoy another One Man Administration under Lord Rosebery. His party, says this oracle of the other party, have evidently made up their minds to treat him as a hero. They are busy constructing a Rosebery legend, adds the oracle; a remark which interests me the more because I made it yesterday, and one likes to be corroborated. Most heroic lives have a legendary element. Mr. Gladstone's had. But the legend, like the life, is almost always evolved out of the circumstances and exigencies of the situation in which the hero finds himself, and the Rosebery legend bears unmistakable ear-marks of its democratic origin.

The facts on which it rests may be perfectly true. It is the use made of the facts which leaves the legendary stamp on them. There is, for example, the visit of the new Prime Minister to the London County Council on Tuesday. The visit was actually made and no doubt it was the first time that a Prime Minister of England had paid such a visit to a body which is, after all, only a glorified vestry. The act was simple and natural, but see what it becomes and how it is described from opposite points of view. The organ of Progressive municipal Radicalism hails it with feverish delight.

'When the Prime Minister of England walks into the chamber of the London Council, where he sits as the representative of Finsbury, it is a truism to say that a democratic *régime* has been inaugurated.'

The expert controversialist when he has a doubtful proposition to advance often prefers to call it a truism.

His appearance was, to this Radical writer, not only picturesque but a promise and a pledge which all Radicals view with joy. Not so the Conservative, who hints that Lord Rosebery was only posing, and that this attitude, though excusable for once, will have to be dropped when the serious business of Government has begun. Neither seems to me a true view. Lord Rosebery's interest in the London County Council is perfectly genuine, but his presence in Spring Gardens on Tuesday involved no promise or pledge beyond what had often been given previously. Very likely he meant his colleagues, and also the public, to understand that his interest in the affairs of London was none the less because he now has an Empire to look after. But there certainly was no hysterical or lyrical intention in the act.

The theory of the One Man Administration is not much strengthened by the first official summons to the party. The invitation to 'a meeting of the Liberal party in the House of Commons to be held at the Foreign Office on Monday, March 12,' went out in the joint names of the Earl of Rosebery and Sir William Harcourt. I am not sure whether there is a precedent for such a course. It need not be assumed that it means a duumvirate. It does mean to emphasise the fact that Sir William Harcourt is leader in the House of Commons. If the meeting of the Liberal members of the House were an ordinary one it would be summoned in the name of the Leader of the House alone. As it is a meeting to hear a statement from the new Prime Minister, the name of the new Prime Minister appears in the notice. But as Sir William Harcourt was next after Lord Rosebery the most conspicuous candidate for the leadership of the whole party, his

friends may think the inclusion of his name a graceful recognition, as it is, of the claims he loyally waived. It probably does not go beyond that, unless one is to suppose that Lord Rosebery thinks it worth while to smooth the ruffled plumage of the austere Radicals who cannot, or could not, brook a 'Peer Premier.'

The phrase, which is hardly English, is Mr. Labouchere's. He and Mr. Storey and the rest of the malcontent deputation who burst in upon Mr. Marjoribanks with their protest against being ruled by a Peer, may be able to attend a party meeting to which they are convoked by Sir William Harcourt. The collapse of their little rebellion does not necessarily leave them outside of the party. Mr. Labouchere takes a characteristic revenge on the associates who declined to follow him into his 'cave.' The Radicals, he tells us, love a Lord; as Byron said Tommy Moore did. Mr. Labouchere is himself a lofty exception; perhaps because he had a Lord for uncle, Lord Taunton.

Times are changing, but a title has been, down to the present moment, little or no hindrance to political ambition in this country. Often it has been a help. There is a story—a true story, this one—of a brief conversation between an eminent but titled Conservative and the new Premier. The Conservative said: 'You must admit, Rosebery, that our titles have been of great use to us both in our political careers.' I will not say what Lord Rosebery's answer was. But it might be difficult to name any other member of the House of Lords who, both in public and in private life, has shown a stronger desire to find himself on a level with the great multitude of his fellow citizens. It is no secret that he would have rejoiced if he could have sat in the House of Commons. That does not necessarily

imply any hostility to his own order. It only means that the House of Commons is the centre and true seat of political authority; the governing power in this country; and a man who wishes to govern would naturally like to be at the centre.

Lord Rosebery has shown in many ways, and, as I said, both in public and private life, a tendency to democratic ideas rare in his order, and a simplicity of taste rarer still. Little things show what a man is really like. Let us take as illustrations some of the things called little, and see whether they do not show that, if he cannot rid himself wholly of the paraphernalia of his rank, he reduces them to the plainest expression. For titles he seems at times to have a positive aversion. He is Earl of Rosebery, but on the title pages of his published speeches and of his masterly little book on Pitt, you read: 'By Lord Rosebery.' It is probably the only case in the peerage where the peer voluntarily descends to a rank lower than his own. He could not well call himself 'Mr.' Rosebery—it would be misleading—and the time for Citizen Rosebery, or for Citizen Smith, has not yet arrived in this country, nor is likely to arrive in his day. The same form is used on his dinner invitation cards: 'Lord Rosebery requests, etc.,' and it is stamped on his despatch boxes. His signature has, at times, a marked peculiarity. A Peer in this country signs himself Salisbury, Devonshire, and so on. It is, or was, a territorial designation, and no initial precedes the name. Lord Rosebery signs in a manner difficult to reproduce in print, for the initial of his Christian name is made to form a monogram with the R of Rosebery, or sometimes the A and R only are used. The same form may be seen on some of his note-paper, and may also be seen carved in stone on the

medallions over the gateway of The Durdans, a delightful country place which he has almost created.

There are, it is true, precedents for this in earlier times, but not in modern times. I do not think he troubled himself much about precedents, except as answers to friendly critics. Consciously or unconsciously, he was trying to adapt himself and his name to the customs of the great majority of the people. When he was elected first presiding officer of the London County Council he carried a motion that titles should be dropped, and during all his reign over that body he was known only as Mr. Chairman. He delighted in an experience which befel him in New York where the first of a pair of confidence men, professing to know him, addressed him as Smith. 'My name is Rosebery,' was his answer, and at the next corner the confederate rushed up to him with a 'How do you do, Mr. Rosebery?' He chose his associates from all classes, and long before Mr. John Burns had shaken off the more violent socialism of his earlier days, referred to him in public as 'my honoured colleague, Mr. Burns.' It is, I think, among that body of colleagues of the London County Council that some of the staunchest supporters are to be found; a democratic body if ever there was one. He would not separate himself from a man he thought honest because he was mistaken or indiscreet. He once even found, or made, an opportunity to say a good word for the M'Dougall himself.

The society he prefers is certainly not what is called, or calls itself by way of distinction and for the sake of exclusiveness, society in London. He has seldom been seen in those select circles of late years—seldom, at any rate, at parties or balls, except those which official duty imposed on him. A Foreign Minister is not his own



master. He must entertain and he must, though more rarely, go to entertainments. Ministerial dinners and Foreign Office receptions are inevitable. When Lord Rosebery must do these things he does them as well as they can be done. His last two receptions will not soon be surpassed in splendour. As for friendships and intimacies, they take no account of rank with any sensible man. To reject a friend or a party leader because he is a Peer, would probably seem to him as foolish as to choose him because he is a Peer. The character not the coronet or the want of it, is what is important. The lists of his guests at Dalmeny, at Mentmore, and at The Durdans, include many a name which the smart world would not recognise, or would recognise with a shudder. Mayfair was once agitated because he was said to have asked his late trainer to dine with him at Brooks's. I do not know whether the anecdote was true, or whether the committee of that 'Whig temple' remonstrated. But it is quite true that Lord Rosebery regarded Cannon as a friend, and showed that he did in more ways than one. Never, I imagine, has there been an Englishman in any rank of life whose own life was more strictly ordered in accordance with the principle that the ties of humanity are universal.

## III

The new Prime Minister is thirteen years younger than was Mr. Gladstone when he first entered upon the duties of that great office. Mr. Gladstone was fifty-nine. Lord Rosebery is forty-six. Those who believe in numerical coincidences may like to take note of the fact that it is just thirteen years since Lord Rosebery

first accepted office under the Crown. It was Mr. Gladstone who offered it to him, and the office which Mr. Gladstone then thought Lord Rosebery best fitted to fill was that of Under Secretary at the Home Office.

Every man in public life has, of course, to serve his apprenticeship. But the circumstances were peculiar. The friendship between the two men was already close. The first and second Midlothian campaigns had been fought, and Mr. Gladstone had been elected to Parliament for and by that constituency. Dalmeny, Lord Rosebery's Scottish home, had been Mr. Gladstone's home during those eventful days. He had seen something of his host's position and popularity in that part of the world. The great meetings in the Edinburgh Corn Exchange and in the Waverley Market in the same city had revealed to whoever cared to see it the strength of the hold which this young Scottish nobleman had upon the people of Scotland. I suppose, also, Mr. Gladstone must have known something of the services Lord Rosebery had rendered him in Midlothian. He did not know the full extent of his obligations. Perhaps nobody knew it, or is ever likely to know it, but everybody knew that they were of the kind which had earned an ample recognition.

Mr. Gladstone's measure of what was ample was this Under Secretaryship, and this he offered sixteen months after forming his second administration in April 1880. It adds a little to the piquancy of the present situation that the Home Secretary was then Sir William Harcourt. The Under Secretaryship of the Home Office may have been ample to begin with, but when Lord Rosebery had held it for some two years he resigned the post. That was in 1883. He remained out of office till the end of 1884. I dare say he preferred in-

dependence. I am certain he preferred independence to a subordinate departmental place. But it is not known that any other proposal was made to him till November 1884. During that interval it seemed to be Mr. Gladstone's opinion that his government would get on as well without Lord Rosebery as with him. Perhaps the old Prime Minister did not grasp all at once the meaning of his young colleague's resignation. There have been many occasions during Mr. Gladstone's life when his perception of the values of men seemed slow, and not always sure. Indeed, judgment of men, of individuals, has not always been his strong point.

It was not now. The knowledge of Lord Rosebery's real merits and uses in public life came to him later—a good deal later. He had, however, become aware by the end of 1884 that his Ministry needed strengthening. Mr. Fawcett died. Mr. Shaw Lefevre was made Postmaster-General in his stead. The political situation had become for various reasons if not critical, menacing, Lord Rosebery had made sundry appearances on public platforms, and developed a degree of influence with the public which was not wholly lost on Mr. Gladstone. He began, after this somewhat long process of education, to open his mind to the fact that, though Lord Rosebery might be still a young man and still without much official or departmental experience, he had the ear of the country and the unlimited confidence of one very important section of the country. His young friend could bring him, in short, what he wanted, an increase of popularity, and in a Ministry already nearly five years old and clearly on the down grade, an infusion of new blood was obviously desirable, and youth no objection but the contrary. So it was that he made up his mind to offer Lord Rosebery the First

Commissionership of Works, a post of secondary importance, and that of Lord Privy Seal, a great post, historically, which has of late years become mainly honorary. He filled these two offices, with a seat in the Cabinet, till June 1885, when Mr. Gladstone resigned.

Thus far Lord Rosebery had had no great official opportunity of making his mark. The mark he had made had been individual. In the short administration of 1886 he took his proper position as Foreign Minister. He held it only from February to August, but he at once signalised his fitness for those high duties. The statesmen of the Continent became aware that a new man had arisen in England with whom they would have to deal. This novice handled delicate affairs with the precision and firmness of an old diplomatic hand. Then came Home Rule, and the long exile from power which his absorption in that subject brought upon Mr. Gladstone and his party. Most men considered it a calamity. Lord Rosebery was in the flower of full manhood, and the blossoming of a sudden reputation was chilled and checked by this long political frost. Yet when 1892 came, and Mr. Gladstone was again borne to power by his Irish allies—and by them alone, since there was a majority against him in Great Britain—Lord Rosebery showed no eagerness to resume the office in which he had distinguished himself.

He was summoned to it by his chief, by the party, by the country, perhaps by the persuasion of the Queen herself, who had, while he first held the Secretaryship of State for Foreign Affairs, pronounced him a Heaven-born Foreign Minister. There was, to speak the plain truth, no other man in the Liberal party at that time in whose fitness for that place the nation had any

confidence whatever. But Lord Rosebery thought that a good time for a yachting trip with his two boys along the west coast of Scotland. He said he was not a candidate for office, and could not accept office. The telegram which at the last moment induced him to change his mind reached him, I believe, at Oban, and he reluctantly came south. It was understood, and it was expected by the country, that he was to have a free hand. It is not necessary to suppose that any doubt on the point had delayed his decision. His desire to remain in private life was due to private considerations, largely if not entirely. But you have only to turn to the newspapers of that day to see how anxiously his presence in the new Ministry was longed for by everybody but those knots of new Radicals whose ideal of national greatness is Holland; the Holland of to-day which, in spite of her past greatness, is a cipher in European politics.

The popular estimate of Mr. Gladstone and his foreign affairs—for he in truth conducted them while Lord Granville was Foreign Minister—may be a wrong one, and may be unjust to him. But it existed, and still exists, and it had to be taken account of. It is not too much to say that if Lord Rosebery had persisted in his refusal, public confidence would have been withheld from the last Gladstone Administration, so far as foreign affairs were concerned. But he yielded, and he had not been long in the saddle before questions presented themselves for solution well calculated to test both his courage and his capacity. Among them was the Egyptian question.

Egypt is, in one sense, the Ireland of the Foreign Office. She is always there, and always in trouble of some sort or another. Not unlike the perplexities

which the Irish patriot creates for his English rulers are the perplexities which in Egypt are the offspring of foreign intrigues—of French intrigues above all. That does not make them the easier to deal with. No man who knows anything about Egypt doubts that English rule in that country has been beneficent and unselfish. There never has been a day since 1882 and the French refusal to bear any longer her joint responsibility of rule—never a day when England would not have been glad to get out of Egypt if she could. The obligations she had accepted bound her to the banks of the Nile. There goes on in Cairo and elsewhere one incessant cabal against English rule. There may be an explosion at any moment. There are frequent explosions at moments the most unexpected. That is what an English Foreign Minister has to be ready for.

Three crises of the gravest character have occurred during the last eighteen months. In each one the enemies of England on the Nile have had the aid of the enemies of England—that is, of any but a Little England—on the banks of the Thames. Europe looks on with curiosity to see how in such circumstances an English Foreign Minister deports himself. It was seen that Lord Rosebery supported Lord Cromer to the full. Turkey was sullen, France angry, no European power helpful, and from none was help asked. But the crisis was always disposed of. More than that, it was disposed of with little help from his colleagues, with little support from them in Parliament or in the country. It was the country itself which supported him. Mr. Gladstone's partiality for France and strange belief in French friendship for England indisposed him to take a strong line in Egypt in opposition to France. He spoke with more voices than one. Latterly, his view stiffened, and

once at least he committed himself to the policy of occupation. But more than once before he had used language of a very embarrassing kind.

There is a story on this point which is probably true, but I prefer to leave the responsibility for it with the French paper in which it first saw the light. Mr. Gladstone had made one of those speeches on Egypt with which for a time he used to rekindle French hopes of seeing England evacuate that country. M. Waddington, then French Ambassador in London, betook himself to the Foreign Office next day, had his audience, and expressed to Lord Rosebery his hope that now at last the moment had come when England would give effect to her pledges to leave Egypt. He asked Lord Rosebery if he was able to give him any more explicit assurances than those contained in Mr. Gladstone's gratifying speech of the day before. Lord Rosebery replied that he could return no answer to M. Waddington's question, because he had not had time to read the Prime Minister's speech! This story is contained in one of M. Waddington's despatches. It dispelled once for all any lingering doubt as to whether Lord Rosebery or Mr. Gladstone was Foreign Minister. Here or in America the anecdote might make no strong impression. But on the Continent, where strict notions of administrative hierarchy prevail, it was accepted as a revelation, and made Lord Rosebery stronger than ever.

There have been other difficulties with France; one, at least, which was quite serious enough. There were difficulties with Russia. There was the Franco-Siamese question. There were African questions, Uganda above all. As one after the other arose, the Chancelleries of Europe were on the *qui vive* to see whether Lord Rosebery really had that free hand for which he was believed

to have stipulated. They came in each case to the conclusion that he had. It finally ceased to be a question. It came to be understood that so long as Lord Rosebery remained at the Foreign Office, the foreign policy of England remained in his hands. It was seen, also, that though his predilections, or rather convictions, were known to be on the side of the Triple Alliance, he held the balance even. If the moment came, he might probably side with Germany against France, but he was not the man to take a premature step, or to show his hand till he was ready to play it. After some months, the impression he made abroad was decisive. England had had no minister since Palmerston who was so much respected. By the friends of England—she has none too many—he was liked and trusted. By her enemies he was dreaded. By both he was regarded as a strong, patient, adroit, inflexible Minister.

In the English Foreign Office Lord Rosebery made his mark from the beginning of his first tenure of office in 1886. He mastered the business. He grasped the points. He inspired the permanent chiefs with respect. Men who had grown grey in the service said that his minutes on the despatches were such as the oldest and ablest Minister might have penned. He took command of his department. The rule is that the department takes command of the Minister. I will add one other thing, based on the testimony of half-a-dozen men in the Foreign Office in various positions. They agreed in saying that from the heads of the great departments into which the Foreign Office is divided down to the porters and messenger boys, there was no one who did not deplore Lord Rosebery's departure. There as elsewhere he made himself something more than liked : the feeling for him was and is one of affection.



## SIR WILLIAM HARCOURT

[LONDON, MARCH 1894]

### I

THE second figure in an administration of which some think he ought to be the head must be, for that reason alone, a considerable personage. But there are many other reasons why Sir William Harcourt must be deemed a considerable personage. I do not know—how am I to know?—whether the greatness of his position is understood in America, or the extraordinary energy of his character. It is not time, happily, to write his biography. It may be permissible to attempt a study of the man, or of some of the many sides of a very versatile individuality, and to look at some of the incidents of his political life.

About one thing there was no dispute, the leadership of the House of Commons. Sir William simply had no competitor for that great post. That of itself means much. For what is the House of Commons? Is it not dinned day by day into the ears of all mankind that the House of Commons is the one really representative legislative body in the United Kingdom? It is, at any rate, the most popular body. It contains, or is supposed to contain, the cream of the two, or perhaps three, great parties into which the political forces of the kingdom are for the present divided. I

imagine that the American who has not lived in England may have some difficulty in making clear to himself the difference—the immense difference—in authority and in influence, and above all, in social position—between the House of Commons at Westminster and the House of Representatives at Washington. It may be worth while to go into that matter more fully some day. All I wish to do now is to point out that the difference does exist. The English do think of their House of Commons with more respect than we are wont to think of our House of Representatives. To enter it is a higher ambition. To lead it gives a man a far more distinguished position. To lead either party in the House of Commons is a distinction than which there are few higher in England. Could the same thing be said of America? To be chosen chief of the Commons after a competition would be an honour. To be accepted as the leader to whom there is no rival is a higher honour.

There are, of course, other able men on the Treasury Bench. There would have been more but for the party split in 1886. If Mr. Chamberlain had remained a follower of Mr. Gladstone when Mr. Gladstone became a follower of Mr. Parnell, the political fortunes of the Liberals would have been certainly altered and probably improved. But Mr. Chamberlain went, as so many other of Mr. Gladstone's best colleagues went. It was supposed at one time that Mr. John Morley might succeed him. Mr. John Morley has become an important member of the party. He has probably had a greater indirect and secondary influence on the course of events than anybody. He has had access to Mr. Gladstone's mind. He is credited with no small part of that missionary effort which brought his great leader

round to Home Rule. He has governed Ireland. He has won the respect of the House. He has even won its attention ; which is more rarely given. He can speak, and speak well. He is red hot with convictions and impulses and with emotions of the kind which often sway an assembly, popular or parliamentary. He has an important following in the country, and a conspicuous place in the regard and esteem of his fellow-countrymen. And he was never so much as mentioned as a possible competitor with Sir William Harcourt for the leadership.

If he was not mentioned, who else could be? Not Mr. Fowler, whose conduct of the Parish Councils bill, though marked by ability and resource, lacked the sympathetic and flexible qualities which are essential to leadership ; both which Mr. Gladstone had in a supreme degree. Not Sir George Trevelyan, whose political position has been seriously impaired by his instability and by his failure to keep in touch with his party. Not Mr. Mundella, whose excellence as the head of the Board of Trade is recognised. Not Mr. Asquith, who in sheer intellectual force, and especially in argumentative force, and perhaps most of all in force of character and rectitude, has made a place for himself apart. Mr. Asquith, however, has yet to learn some things about the House of Commons ; about its temper and idiosyncrasies, as well as about its procedure. Certainly not Mr. Bryce, who is respected as a mine of historical lore, but who has an unlucky knack of irritating the House by a manner and by methods in debate both more pragmatic than the House will stand. Not even Mr. Campbell Bannerman, for Mr. Bannerman, though a favourite with the House, and a cool speaker with a power of presenting his views in a dry light, seems to lack the specific talent of command, and of that gentle

yet firm guidance which is indispensable to him who would conduct this unruly body along the straight and narrow paths it is so often compelled to follow.

As so often happens, this long string of negatives results in an affirmative, and the affirmative is Sir William Harcourt. I set aside the comparison which might suggest itself to the indiscreet between him and his immediate predecessor. Mr. Gladstone stood alone. Nor is his former chief the model Sir William is commonly believed to have studied most closely at that period when his style was still to form. Not Mr. Gladstone but Mr. Disraeli was his model. It is not to be understood that Mr. Vernon Harcourt, as he then was, set himself consciously to imitate Mr. Disraeli or anybody else. Imitation is the foible of weak men, and Sir William, whatever else he may have been, was never weak. But most men have an ideal, or most men see in some other one man certain qualities and methods which attract them strongly and influence them strongly. Mr. Disraeli and Mr. Harcourt were friends, or at least were on terms of easy if not of intimate acquaintance. It might be profitable, were it permissible, to restate in a different way some of the terms of comparison or of contrast between Mr. Disraeli and Mr. Gladstone. But such a statement, to have any value, would require to be drawn with entire frankness, and it may be doubted whether American public opinion is, on this subject, in a state to welcome entire frankness. At any rate, this is not the moment for such a study, nor the place. I content myself with saying that the two great members of Parliament who, since Sir Robert Peel's death, have divided the suffrages of the English people, were the complements of each other, and perhaps the counterparts. I imagine that one of the

qualities which made Mr. Disraeli interesting to Mr. Harcourt was his complete exemption from these enthusiasms which disturb the judgment in public affairs. It was not his method to envelop the House in a whirlwind of lofty emotions. If he elevated the tone of its debates, the elevation was intellectual, not moral nor passionate. He led it by knowledge of men and of the world, by tact, by extraordinary quickness of perception, and by an estimate of each crisis as it arose which was seldom other than exact.

A similar account may be given, in rather less sweeping terms, of Sir William Harcourt. He is a most accomplished and capable parliamentarian. He knows, of course, the procedure. Anybody may master that, though the degree of mastery is important. It was one secret of Mr. Parnell's early influence—influence is not the word, but of his early success in bending the House to his will against its own. He had brooded over the rules and standing orders till they became instruments of policy, fashioned to his hand, and often serving uses totally irreconcilable with the purposes of their framers. Only now and then does such a man appear. Sir William Harcourt is not of the Parnell pattern. He knows the rules, of course; the game could not be played at all without them. But to twist them to his purpose is not one of his usual resources. He prefers to use men. He has a knowledge of the weaknesses of men. He has a whole armoury of fallacies which he can gird on when they are wanted, and brandish in the face of a House very apt to take them as the syllogisms of an invincible logic.

They are not, however, his chief weapons of debate, nor is it often safe to assume that a strong man habitually resorts to weak or cheap devices. The value of a

stratagem is in its novelty, its unexpectedness, its rarity. For daily use he relies on clear statement, on an energetic diction, on that familiarity with his opponents' weak points, and also their strong points, which comes from long study pursued patiently with a definite purpose; on repartee, in which he is expert; on his mastery of the subject and power of making others master it; on wide experience. He knows the moods of the House even if he does not create them, as Mr. Gladstone often did in order to fall in with them and to leave members under the impression that he was but giving voice to their own convictions and wishes. It was a very fine piece of art. But it is much to know them and to know how to yield to them gracefully, and above all quickly. The House must be agreed with while it is in the way, if at all. It is the more creditable to its present leader since he is believed to be, like its late leader, the possessor of a somewhat imperious temper. Both have learnt how to command by obeying.

## II

Sir William Harcourt's strength lies in the House of Commons rather than in the country. His reputation is a House of Commons reputation, as he probably prefers it should be. To enter the House he gave up what promised to be a great career at the parliamentary bar. Both he could not follow. Etiquette does not permit a member of the House to practise before a committee of the House, or of either House, in private bill cases. It was a question between a political career and an income. The income was a sure thing; the career had at one time elements of uncertainty. The fees at the parliamentary bar exceed all others, and Sir William

had got both feet on the ladder. He had attained a position very rapidly, and a large practice was already his when he decided to renounce it. We sometimes hear of a lawyer giving up the bar when it is the bar which gives up the lawyer. That was not the case with Sir William Harcourt, then still Mr. Vernon Harcourt.

He has since had occasion to deal pretty often with legal matters and with constitutional matters. His enemies—for enemies he had—used to sneer at his want of learning. The want existed, for the most part, in their own imaginations. A black-letter lawyer he never was, nor a very learned lawyer in the sense in which some great judges like Baron Parke have been learned lawyers, or some great advocates like Sir Horace Davey, now himself a judge. But he had a grasp of principles; and that is worth more, even at the bar, and certainly more in public life. He was and is a jurist, and he has always had a power of mastering a subject, legal or other. He was professor of international law at Oxford, a post which implies some legal knowledge on the part of him who has filled it, and filled it well. He has been in the running for the Lord Chancellorship—perhaps still is, should the moment arrive when he no longer cared to lead the House of Commons. He was, as we all know, the author of the ‘Historicus’ letters, and the ‘Historicus’ letters, though of course not to the taste of Americans at the time, were no mean contribution to the literature of perplexed international questions. Have they left a prejudice behind them against their writer in the American breast? It was a long time ago, and I do not quite see why we should owe Sir William a grudge because he took the side of his own country on disputed points of law and of diplomacy.

Yet, Mr. Stead, who has recently returned, I will not

say from America, but from the World's Fair, has announced to a bewildered English public that Sir William Harcourt is not popular in the United States. We are, I suppose, for United States to read Chicago, which seems to have been the spot Mr. Stead thought best worthy of his attention. Chicago was not prepared to allow Sir William to be made Prime Minister, and had a candidate ready to beat him; none other than Mr. William Waldorf Astor. Such are the invaluable informations most lately imparted to the British public. Mr. Stead is often bewildering, and when he explains becomes more bewildering still. None the less might it be interesting to be told in detail the secret of Sir William's imaginary unpopularity in America. It can hardly be because he married an American wife, or because his father-in-law was an American Minister in Vienna and London, or because Sir William's liking for what is American, and his goodwill to America, extend beyond his own family.

A similar reproach has been flung at Sir William since he became Chancellor of the Exchequer. They say he is not a financier. It is true he was not a financier. He never had a business training, was never in a financial house in the city, like Mr. Goschen, his predecessor in the Treasury, nor ever that I heard of a bank director. The same thing may be said of Mr. Gladstone, yet Mr. Gladstone has a considerable reputation as a financier. There have been critics even of Mr. Gladstone. A Bank of England director has been heard to say that the late Prime Minister did not really understand finance or business. He survived that criticism, as well as some others. Sir William Harcourt, I imagine, went into the Chancellorship of the Exchequer much as he went into a great engineering case at the



parliamentary bar. He was not an engineer, but he could get up a case. The other day I asked one of the counsel in the great cordite action how much he had to know about cordite and balistite and nitro-glycerine in order to try that cause. 'Enough to cross-examine effectively the best expert,' was his answer; and he presently added: 'By the time the trial was over, we knew as much about the subject matter as any of them.' And he told me of the visits he made to Nobel's work, where you have a fair chance of being blown up at any moment, and his study of the processes on the spot.

In the same way, the Chancellor of the Exchequer has help, all the help he wants, from bankers and other experts of the city, not to speak of the Treasury staff; men who are trained in figures and finance from their youth upward. Every Minister new to the work has to learn the business of his Department, whether it be finance or war or diplomacy, or whatever else. He may not be a Turgot or a Sir Robert Peel, but he learns his trade. The Chancellorship of the Exchequer is, in fact, considered a rather easy berth; easy in ordinary times with a surplus; not easy in hard times when a deficit has to be made good, and new taxes imposed, and new sources of revenue invented or enlarged. The present is such a time, and the real extent of Sir William Harcourt's financial abilities will be guageable after he has produced his Budget next month.

There are those who say that the real complaint against the present Chancellor is not that he is too little of a financier, but too much. The complaint is probably true of all Chancellors, as Chancellors. They are guardians of the public purse, and they tighten the strings of it against all comers. The demand for money

to build new ships of war was supposed to have found its firmest opponent in Sir William. He has never been reckoned a very staunch Imperialist, and he thought it hard that he should be called upon to find three millions sterling in addition to the usual provision for the Navy at a time when a big deficit of perhaps two millions more stared him in the face. He rather astonished the House yesterday by declaring that he had always been a strong advocate of the supremacy of the British Navy. That may be an individual opinion, or it may be an expression of loyalty to his chief and to the settled policy of the Cabinet. Lord Spencer carried the Cabinet with him even before Mr. Gladstone ceased to be the head of it, and Sir William is the exponent of the ascertained determination of the whole body of which he is so important a member.

Why he should not be a greater power in the country outside of the House of Commons, is one of those problems, half personal, half otherwise, for which no very complete solution can readily be found. But I will indicate one which is not often suggested. The majority of the people of this country seem to care very little about House of Commons reputations. Perhaps, if the whole truth were known, they care less about the House itself than they are supposed to. A great personality, Mr. Disraeli or Mr. Bright or Mr. Gladstone, makes the House interesting to people in general. When he is gone, the interest goes, or a great part of it goes. We often hear Sir Robert Peel and Mr. Disraeli and Mr. Gladstone each of them described as the greatest member of Parliament who ever lived. They were all great ; Mr. Gladstone, probably, on the whole, the greatest parliamentarian of the three, even when all due allowance is made for the note of enthu-

siasm, which is naturally loudest just after his retirement.

Sir William Harcourt does not belong in that rank, but he is great enough in the House to make one wonder why he is not greater in the minds of the multitude. It is not from lack of either general or special capacity. When he was being pressed for Prime Minister it was said, and said truly, that he had done far more party work up and down the country than Lord Rosebery had. He had spoken much oftener from the platform than Lord Rosebery. Sir William is, moreover, an exceedingly effective speaker. If he is not, in the high sense of the words, a great orator, he has an energy of mind and a rhetorical art which make him easily the master of most audiences. I once heard him in the hall which is indelibly associated with the memory of Bright; the great Town Hall of Birmingham. The audience is the most critical in England. They have all the natural acuteness and hard sense of the best type of artisan, and their education in oratory and in the criticism of oratory was the work of Bright himself. They gave Sir William on this occasion no ordinary welcome, and he made them no ordinary speech. I remember thinking at the time that the test might be taken as decisive, and that Sir William and his oratory both came well out of the ordeal. There never was a doubt of his success, from beginning to end. A month since, he spoke at Portsmouth before the National Liberal Federation; an audience of hardened politicians who look upon a speech as a political instrument; as one part, and not the most important part, of the machine which they have invented and constructed to turn out majorities. There also, and before these highly practical critics, his success was complete.

The occasions may be taken as the two extremes of requirement, and the speaker who can satisfy both has very little to learn in the matter of political oratory with a definite purpose. Yet with all these accomplishments and achievements, Sir William's influence in the country is not quite what might be expected.

I am reminded of the late Mr. Bradlaugh, and of his account of his own relation to the public. He was telling me that whenever he preached the Republic, he carried the audience with him, and he was ready to infer that Republican ideas had a foothold among the English people. 'But suppose, Mr. Bradlaugh, that instead of making them a speech you sent them a letter or a message in favour of the Republic; what then?' He reflected a moment, and admitted that it would be without effect. There is an analogy between his case and Sir William Harcourt's. The influence of each with the country depends in no small measure upon the goodness of their speaking; and in a less degree upon their general reputation or authority. It certainly is not, in Sir William's case, the absence of convictions. He is never without convictions, and the unflagging sincerity with which he accepts and upholds each new set is a very striking proof of the robustness of his nature, and of moral vigour.

The least sketch of Sir William Harcourt would be misleading if it did not deal with some of those personal traits which, after all, are more interesting and more descriptive of the man than any number of political characteristics. It is these personal traits which have made him a delightful personage to the House of Commons. The largeness of his nature fills that large chamber. He fills a good deal of it with his large frame and stature and manner. The stranger who

beheld him for the first time would be in no doubt that the legislator to whom this imposing physique belonged was somebody. It is a massive and powerful face which surmounts the powerful body. You expect him to be massive in speech, and sometimes he is, sometimes even ponderous, but only when he thinks the occasion demands this method. His obvious preference is for light comedy. His intellectual exuberance manifests itself in a stream of sparkling sentences. He has humour and good-humour, tact and sympathy, and these are qualities which are invaluable. Of old time he was thought to have a temper which blazed somewhat fiercely when stirred. If he ever had it he probably still has it, but it is under control, and nothing is more useful than a temper under control. He is not merciful in debate. Perhaps he enjoys seeing his opponent go down under his swashing blow. Most combatants do.

Even in private, ebullitions of this energy may be noted. Neither in public nor in private do they diminish his popularity. Of malice there is never a trace; it is all honest, hearty, outspoken, and manly. No one is more genial, no one has more surprises, no one more varied conversation, and no one asserts a more just supremacy amid a company of his fellow-men. He has that calmness which goes with strength; no need of effort if you are conscious of being equal to the occasion. And he is equal. There is hardly a more interesting social spectacle than to see him take possession of a dinner-table and keep it. The smooth strong flow of talk is fed from many springs. He has authority but is never didactic; learning which escapes the reproach of pedantry; wit that is too genial to scorch; and he uses, if need be, all the resources of

the accomplished debater at critical moments of conversation.

Never was a better opportunity to judge Sir William Harcourt than during these recent weeks. He had undergone a bitter mortification; the ambition of his political life baffled as it seemed within his grasp. But if you had met him in the first days of this chagrin, you would have found him in his most admirable mood, cordial and sunny to all the world, and in his very best form, as society says. Society watched him curiously in these circumstances, and paid him the honourable tribute due to an undisturbed demeanour, to faculties which shone their brightest in this hour of lasting disappointment, and to a cheerful heroism of which only a fine character is capable.

## MRS. HUMPHRY WARD

[LONDON, APRIL 1894]

MRS. HUMPHRY WARD's new novel, *Marcella*, appears with all the honours. It is announced long in advance, and on the day fixed for publication, April 3, the leading papers review it at length. The public is understood to be impatient; it must have an account of this book at the earliest possible moment, and must be told with authority what to think of it. There is, no doubt, a sense in which the public is impatient. Mrs. Ward has created for herself such a position in literature that few dare confess themselves uninterested in anything she does; few with a social reputation to lose. At the same time I imagine—and the fact is creditable to her—that the circulating-library public is not precisely her public. The average man is not her man. The average men and women who devour the average three-volume novel are not those who read Mrs. Ward with the greatest eagerness, nor those whom she has chiefly in view when she writes.

It is an audience of the best, or, at any rate, of the most serious, to whom this gifted author appeals. She is herself serious; in one sense too serious or too strenuous. She has the seriousness which comes of effort. Her books—and *Marcella* is no exception to the rule—impress the reader as the result of conscientious and

long-continued toil;—too long continued, perhaps. The lighter aspects of life interest her but little. She must have a problem, and to the solution of it she applies with unremitting industry all the energies of her soul. Her first book, *Robert Elsmere*, was a hostage to fortune. A novelist, and above all a woman-novelist, who makes her bow to the public with three volumes of religious scepticism is thenceforward under an obligation from which neither readers nor critics can release her. She can only release herself. *David Grieve* seemed to some of her admirers and friends—she has legions of both—a step toward emancipation. It was not a sequel to *Robert Elsmere*. There were signs in it that Mrs. Ward had served her apprenticeship to the exclusively solemn, and that she might venture next time into more open fields where the flowers blossomed and the zephyrs sported. There were hopes that she might at least be more brief.

These hopes are not dispelled by *Marcella*, but they are postponed. She has entered upon a new task, and it is still a task; annexed, perhaps, a new domain, but here also there is more of the air of the hothouse than of the breath of heaven; applied herself to a fresh subject, but to one hardly less oppressive; and still in the same spirit of doing her best all the time. Religion has given place to Socialism. She has allowed the politics of the period—there is no other phrase for it—to determine what might have been a purely literary choice. Socialism or social reform in some shape has taken possession of the European mind, and perhaps lately of the English mind most of all. It is the problem which presents itself daily and hourly. Mrs. Ward seems to have chosen it because it presents itself daily and hourly. Diffident, perhaps, though surely without reason, of her



own authority, and of her power to fix the attention of others upon any topic which interested herself, she conforms to the fashion and interests herself in the topic which interests others. She is an opportunist in literature. The result is what might have been foreseen. The convert surpasses the teacher in zeal.

It may be said that the intellectual side is stronger in Mrs. Ward than in most women, relatively to the emotional; but it is not predominant. The emotional is predominant, and most of all at those critical moments when the dry light of pure reason is most needed to elucidate her perplexities. Her heroine, for example, the girl Marcella, is a Socialist, but she is a Socialist far more from impulse than from conviction. It may be said that Mrs. Ward meant to draw her so. I think not, but whether she did or not, she has left the stamp of her own individuality upon her in this respect. It is not difficult to imagine the writer, or any other writer who is a woman, honestly trying to reach a reasoned conviction or judgment. She puts before herself the facts and the arguments. She weighs the one and balances the other. She is, to all appearance, on the point of coming to something like a judicial decision, and all at once a whiff of irresistible feminine impulse sweeps away all the elaborate apparatus and material for a logical conclusion, and she makes up her mind exactly as she would have done without them; in obedience to the suggestions of her temperament, and by that incalculably rapid mental process known as intuition. In plain English, her sympathies run away with her.

The modern men of science—are there any women of science or of this branch of science?—will allow no opinion to be individual. They trace all mental pro-

cesses, as they do all acts, to an ancestry more or less remote. They would probably tell Mrs. Ward that even in submitting to the influence of her environment, as she does in dogmatising about Socialism, she could not escape from the limitations which the environment and the mental habits of her progenitors impose upon her. Her mother and grandmothers were little in contact with actual life outside the family or the family circle. They never learnt to legislate or to administer the poor-laws, or to adjust the relations of landlord and tenant, or to carry on any kind of business, public or private. They transmitted to their descendants a brain in which there were no formed channels for the flow of the thoughts applicable to affairs. She has to form them for herself. Is it likely she will set the stream flowing broad and free and true at the first attempt? And if not, what is likely to be the practical value of conclusions on a class of subjects with reference to which her opinions must be, to use the mildest word of all, experimental?

Mrs. Ward showed in *David Grieve* that she was capable of accumulating a mass of material on topics quite alien to the course of her life, and of making a literary use of them. Assimilate them she could not. Her sketch, for example, of the Trois Rats, by which we are to understand the Chat Noir as it existed and still exists in the Rue Victor Massé in Paris, was a *tour de force*. It was wonderfully done, but it was done as from the outside. To enter into the spirit of that singular expression of one side of the art and Bohemian life of one set of Parisian eccentrics, was not given to her. It could not be. If she understood it perfectly she would find it too repulsive to her true woman's nature.

She has made a similar effort in *Marcella*. The central fact or incident in her present book is the poaching tragedy. It is in its essential details a piece of pure though unwitting misrepresentation. She may say, very plausibly, that she is not bound in a work of fiction by a particular set of facts; that she is at liberty to tell her story as she likes, and to draw the moral she likes. That is one of those dangerous half-truths which are so much more capable of mischief than unadulterated falsehoods. Mrs. Ward will not, I think, deny that her narrative had a basis in fact. I know that it had; that she heard the story and was fascinated by it, and thought she saw her way to using it for the purposes of her book and of her new Socialistic gospel. But she has turned it upside down, and drawn from it a moral, or a social protest, which the facts will not support. She must know the real truth, for she lives in the county where the incident happened, and close to the scene. She makes Westall, the gamekeeper, attack Hurd, the poacher—a man employed on the estate—and Hurd shoot the keeper in self-defence. The exact contrary was true. It was the poacher who attacked the keeper, and the killing was as much murder as if no pheasant had ever been preserved.

Let us admit that, so far, she was within her rights. But she has told a story which on the face of it is improbable, and she has so handled it as to create a prejudice against the landlord and a prepossession in favour of the poacher which the relations between the two justify perhaps nowhere in England. It might possibly be true as an exception. Her readers are asked to accept it as the rule. The conditions necessary to the development of her facts hardly exist in England, where ground game is no longer protected as it was formerly—the

occupier now has it—and where a pheasant-preserve differs in little but name from a large poultry-yard. But Mrs. Ward was impressed by the severity, as she thought it, of the penalty the murderer had to pay, and she has made sure of a wider sympathy by improving the facts in his interest. Marcella openly sympathises with him. The reader will be apt to think that Marcella is, for this purpose, Mrs. Ward.

She is herself a more curious and interesting study than any of her characters, or any of her books, or than all of them. An account of Mrs. Humphry Ward which should be perfectly frank, would be instructive, and would, I think, be a helpful criticism on her books. But there are two reasons which forbid one to make the attempt. She is alive, and she is a woman. The pen must stay its course. I have known Mrs. Humphry Ward for many years, and her books, and something about the circumstances of her life. So far as I am concerned, if I gave myself a free hand, my indiscretions would, I feel sure, present her to the craving American public in a more, and not less, attractive light than that which radiates from mere criticism and comment. I mean to say that a more intimate knowledge of the writer, or even such knowledge as comes from acquaintanceship, would add something to the prestige which her books have brought to her, and make her readers more her friends than ever. But I dare not do her this kind of justice. It might be done in France. It is constantly done in France, where, in some respects, the conditions of life are less morbid than in England; where artificial restraints upon the relations between a writer and her public are less numerous and strict than here. I do not speak of mere gossip. There is gossip here; both at dinner-tables and in the press. What I

mean is that a psychological study, which here, and perhaps in America, would give offence merely because it was psychological, would in France or elsewhere on the Continent give none. But a remark or two may perhaps be made, cautiously.

It is almost a matter of wonder that Mrs. Ward's success did not come to her earlier in life. She has always lived amid literature and literary influences. Her family was literary; she was always among books. Her husband is a man both of letters and of art; a writer, as all the world knows, on *The Times*; a writer on art and on many other subjects; certainly with a great knowledge of art, practical and theoretical, and of much beside art. Her uncle was Matthew Arnold, to whom I owe my introduction to her. Other similar influences might be mentioned, yet altogether seem to have moulded her but slowly. True, she wrote a book before *Robert Elsmere*, but it made no great impression, and is forgotten; the very name of it is forgotten. There was no lightness of touch in it, and to this day she has hardly gained lightness of touch. Throughout *Marcella* there is a note, not of seriousness merely, but of intensity. It does at times become fatiguing. The mind of the reader, or of most readers, longs for repose, for variety, for something not too bright or good for human nature's daily food. Whether Mrs. Ward ever consciously tries to be amusing or not, one can only guess. But to try is fatal. Spontaneity is what one longs for; that she should let herself go, and see what comes of it. At times she does, but not in this direction. The gift of humour does not come to her by nature. She does not even seem aware of the literary value of such a gift, or of the incomparable charm of that birdlike carolling which to many women is natural.

Mme. de Sévigné, for example, whose place in French literature is perfectly secure, even in an age which tries to neglect the classics of the seventeenth century—Mme. de Sévigné always seems to write as if she could not help it. Her letters write themselves. Whether she suspected that the outpourings of her soul to her daughter would ever be read by others is disputed. It hardly matters. She would have been a bold woman had she set herself deliberately to address to the public some of the very letters in which the public most delights. It is because of the buoyancy and fresh simplicity of her nature, and of her writing, that one is disposed to choose Mme. de Sévigné as, I do not say a contrast, but a counterpart, to Mrs. Ward. Even in her most elaborate and most celebrated letters, the engagement of *La Grande Mademoiselle* or the death of *Vatel*, for instance, the art is wholly invisible. In Mrs. Ward it is never invisible, or seldom. And the highest art—but the proverb is musty. But the less celebrated letters, the mass of them, those which all but Sévignists read once and no more, are hardly less admirable. The expression of a mother's affection for a daughter might be considered a monotonous theme. It is monotonous, and the variety of the diction is such that the theme is inexhaustible. Never were so many sparkling tunes played on a single string. Nor is the expression often rhetorical. It is simple and inevitable, and it never palls. The letters might be set as a test of literary feeling and of critical perception. Do you like them, and go on reading them all your life? Then you have a taste for what is best in the written biography of the most beautiful of all emotions, and if you have that, you have the equipment of a critic.

It is the want in Mrs. Ward of what is so universal

with Mme. de Sévigné which makes her incomplete and sometimes disappointing. You wish she had less conscience and a simpler intellectual endowment. A book by Mrs. Ward is a work of engineering ; the result of great resources, great energy, great courage and pertinacity. The mass of waters which are to irrigate a province or supply the wants of a great city has been collected into an artificial lake and will be dispersed by equally artificial channels. It is extremely welcome in your house, and you are glad to be able to turn it on for drinking and all other useful household purposes. But it never has quite the flavour of the fountain which wells from the soil, and which tempts the wayfarer to moisten his lips whether he be thirsty or not.

If I were reviewing *Marcella*, which I am not, I should have put these general inquiries on one side, and there would have been less criticism, in the popular meaning of that much misunderstood word, and much cordial acknowledgment of the extraordinary merits of the book. It is at any rate due to Mrs. Ward, since her novel is my text, to say that she has made great advances on her former work. She is a better novelist and a better writer. There is no necessary connection between the two. There is, for example, a sense in which Mr. George Meredith is a novelist, and there is no sense in which he is a writer unless you put a disparaging adjective before the noun.

As a novelist, Mrs. Ward has more insight into character than before, and a better knowledge of the structure of a book. She still wants, I infer, confidence in herself. It may seem a strange thing to say. The evidence of it is to be found in the over-elaboration of all the early part—nearly all the first volume—of *Marcella*. It is as if she had not felt quite sure of having

adequate material to fill the large measure which probably her publisher, and certainly the public, require of her. Every writer knows the doubt which besets him at the beginning, and how, as he goes on, he finds himself richer than he thought, and at last overflows his banks. At first he puts in everything; then he excludes much. It is in exclusion that Mrs. Ward fails; and at the end, as in the beginning, though for a contrary reason. Her story, or the essential part of it, comes to an end with the poaching tragedy, but she has by that time become aware how copious her material is, and how much she still has to say, and she takes a fresh start.

Such is one of the perils which encompass the novelist with a mission, or with a desire for the development of an idea in the course of a story. The Socialism which inspired her book has spoilt it as a work of art: spoilt is too strong a word—has put it out of drawing. In its present form it lacks symmetry and proportion. Where it is best it is very fine. Wharton, as a piece of character-drawing, is a creation. Marcella herself has noble moments, but there are other and many moments when Mrs. Ward has chosen to present her to the public as a prig. A heroine ought to be sympathetic, but a heroine who accepts a lover whom she does not love, from a notion that his position and income will be of use in her propaganda—what is she? Not sympathetic, I hope, to most people. Let us keep things apart. Let a girl be a girl, and let no hand, not even that of a woman with all Mrs. Ward's genius, attempt to substitute a sense of duty for the movements of the heart. She teaches a false lesson in love.

In style, also, Mrs. Ward has gained, and perhaps would have gained more had she been less in earnest



about her own improvement. She is so determined to write well that she sometimes writes badly for that reason only. It was the constant fault of the late George Eliot. She is still too emphatic, and emphasis is a thing to be avoided as you would the devil. Of the seven deadly rhetorical sins, this is most deadly of all. Perhaps it includes them all. There are pedantries, also, which one would like to weed out. But, as I said, I am not reviewing this book, and I end with a profession, which is sincere, of profound homage to the gifts and qualities of the writer who, by the resolute use of them all, has secured for herself a permanent place in the literature of to-day, and perhaps also of to-morrow.

## LORD BOWEN

[LONDON, APRIL 1894]

### I

‘HE was so great a lawyer because he was so much else,’ says one of the eulogists of Lord Bowen, who dies at fifty-eight years of age. That is not the professional view. Most great lawyers still hold that the law is a jealous mistress. Yet Lord Bowen was a great lawyer who touched life on many other sides. It is doubtful whether, on the whole, he had his equal on the Bench. He had, said one of the ablest of his colleagues, a ‘vast’ knowledge of the law. He had a mind which delighted in the subtlest discriminations and yet was capable of taking broad views, with a grasp of principles which does not always go with a capacity for detail. Lord Esher, Master of the Rolls, has pronounced his eulogy in words which, from a man of his stamp, mean a great deal :

‘His knowledge of the whole law was so perfect, and was so accurate, and was so entirely at his command, that I myself have no doubt that he had studied every proposition of law minutely, accurately, and carefully, in order to learn it, long before he was called upon to bring it into practice. . . . His reasoning was so extremely accurate and so beautifully fine that what he said sometimes escaped my mind, which is not so finely edged. . . . His mind was so beautifully and finely edged, and so subtle in its nature, that he went

further and gave us perfect essays in the form of his judgments, which can be handed down to our successors as models of absolute perfection.'

Lord Esher is a judge of remarkable powers, but not, as you perceive on reading this extract, with a very great power of that finished expression which he justly commends in his late colleague. His testimony has perhaps all the more value. He lifts himself to acknowledge in Bowen those particular qualities and gifts which are least common to the most learned lawyers. The profession think that, as a lawyer, he has not had his equal since Mr. Justice Willes died. There is something pathetic in the mention of the name. How many Americans, how many Englishmen, not lawyers, ever heard of Mr. Justice Willes? It is right that the prizes of the Bar and Bench should be splendid in life. Immortality is not one of them, nor that general fame which seems to attend only upon those who were great lawyers and something more.

Lord Bowen's success at the Bar was by no means instantaneous. He had to wait, as so many legal celebrities have had to wait. It was while expecting, and vainly expecting, briefs that he laid the broad and deep foundations of his knowledge of the law, and began the building up on them of that edifice to which the crowning stone was not fitted till his death. Then it was, also, that he wrote for the periodical press—of which in a moment. His legal career may be briefly summed up. It will always be one of Lord Coleridge's claims on public gratitude that he gave Bowen his chance. When the present Lord Chief Justice of England was Attorney - General, in 1870, he appointed Charles Bowen his devil. The official name of the legal devil is Junior Counsel to the Treasury. It was the

Tichborne period. Into that memorable trial Bowen threw himself heart and soul ; and body also. A great part of the real work was his. Tough as he was, it nearly killed him. In 1879 he got that promotion to the Bench to which devilling for the Attorney-General is a regular preliminary—or rather a sure pathway, though there are many others. Three years later he became a Lord Justice of Appeal, and last year, upon Lord Hannen's retirement, a Law Lord, or Lord Ordinary of Appeal, to give him his official designation.

From 1870 to the end, there never was a time when his claim to a foremost place was disputed, nor ever a place which he filled with other than consummate ability. His judicial career has partly eclipsed his early successes at the Bar, but they were many. As the papers refer to the Birmingham Screw Arbitration, I may perhaps mention what Bowen once told me of that case—I suppose it to be the same case—which has a bearing on an old calumny against another very distinguished man, Mr. Chamberlain. Some Radical journal had just revived the story that Mr. Chamberlain's fortune was due to or was greatly augmented by a certain scheme for crushing out the minor manufacturers of wood screws. 'So far is that from the truth,' said Bowen, 'that Chamberlain came near losing a great part of his fortune in the very transactions for which he was reproached.' He went into details which it is right to omit. It is enough to say that the matter went to arbitration, and that it was largely to Bowen that Mr. Chamberlain was indebted for his escape from the heavy loss which threatened him.

There will be, no doubt, an adequate account from some competent hand of Lord Bowen's judicial life and of his immense services to English jurisprudence. Here

it is impossible to do more than refer to them, and to say that Lord Esher expresses no more than the general opinion of Bar and Bench. Lord Bowen has himself explained the secret of his method. He said in a public address : ' The only reasonable and the only satisfactory way of dealing with English law, is to bring to bear upon it the historical method. Mere legal terminology may seem a dead thing. Mix history with it, and it clothes itself with life.'

Upon this canon he based his decisions, and he treated law and legal history with a breadth and acuteness and with a sympathetic grasp which revived its driest bones, and clothed them with the living flesh.

We owe him—I mean to say that we journalists owe him—a particular tribute, because he was at one time one of us. He was a contributor to the *Spectator*, to the *Saturday Review*, and I presume to other journals. I do not suppose he had ever the least notion of adopting journalism as a profession. If he had he abandoned it, and he had the good sense to get out of journalism while it was yet time, and before his life had been thrown away. He wrote for the *Saturday Review* while that periodical still had the power and position it afterwards lost. He left it, as Mr. Prothero has told us in his *Life of Stanley*, because of an attack on Stanley so bitter that he felt himself and his friendship to Stanley compromised by it. He was in no way responsible for the attack. He had nothing to do with the editing of the paper. But his loyalty to his friends had that scrupulous delicacy which was characteristic of him in everything. He washed his hands when his colleagues had touched pitch. The defilement was not his. He was incapable of rancour, and he had an accuracy of mind which forbade him to confound personal

character with religious or other opinions, or to revile the individual because he differed from him on points of doctrine or of church discipline.

The distinction is as broad as noonday, but how many are they to whom it is never visible! It is a distinction which the *Saturday* never understood; or never applied, which is worse. I cannot remember ever to have heard Lord Bowen refer to this incident. When he had shaken off the dust of his feet against the offending journal, he probably forgot all about it. Nor did he ever say anything to me about his connection with journalism. He was 'one of the most brilliant contributors to this journal,' says the *Spectator*. I should think he was. Seldom has any journal had so fine a mind put at its service. The *Spectator* is one of the most intellectual of periodicals, and many great names have adorned its pages, or would have adorned them had not the rule of the anonymous prevailed. But I imagine that to Bowen his connection with these periodicals had no great importance or significance. He was not the type of man to give himself up to work which, if, as Sir Francis Jeune has lately said, literary in some degree, is ephemeral. He had work to do which was not only serious, but of lasting value. During the years that I knew him, he was from the first the lawyer. He had won great fame as a lawyer; his career was settled; his life ordered as he wished it. He had what he loved best and could do best. He might naturally enough have talked to me of journalism. He never mentioned the subject; or never but once. His memories of it may not have been pleasant, though he certainly would not have taken dismal views of that or any other subject. The nearest approach to a reference to the matter was a question whether I did

not regret having left the Bar. I cannot recollect what answer I made. I know what I should say now.

It is possible that Lord Bowen had journalism more or less in mind when he delivered, a year ago, at the Working Men's College, a remarkable lecture on Popular Education. It was a bold thing to put before such an audience such views of the only kind of education available to them. But he never lacked courage, and this is what he said :

‘The noise of newly emancipated tongues drowns the still small voice of culture ; high standards are not recognised or cease to be impressive ; the quality of the supply is affected by the quantity of the demand, since cheap thought, like light claret, can be produced on an extensive scale. Instruction grows apace, knowledge comes, as the poets say, but wisdom lingers ; intellectual modesty and reserve, the sense of proportion, and wholesome mental habits of discrimination all have yet to be acquired. The world seems to have so little power of discerning between the best and the second rate. Sense and good taste are overlooked or slighted, and crowds hasten to worship the beauty of ugliness under the impression that it is art.’

Whether that passage related to journalism or not, there can be little doubt as to what the following implies ; and to what it applies :

‘The highways and byways are given up, so to speak, to the literary bicyclist. He travels in a costume peculiar to himself, and he considers the landscape all his own. Expressions of violence are employed to describe commonplace emotions. Toward individuals we practise the same indistinctness of judgment, the same indifference to proportion. We pursue successful men and women to their down-sitting and up-rising, we enjoy the descriptions of their household furniture. Memorials are erected to every

one who will only die in the odour of respectability. We write long biographies of Nobody and we celebrate the centenaries of Nothing.'

The 'literary bicyclist' would have been adopted as a commonplace of journalism, or as a stock newspaper quotation, had not the English journalist believed, rightly or wrongly, that the nickname would have fastened upon himself. And as the journalist is human he does not like nicknames, and so Lord Bowen's wit failed of what the French call its just good fortune. It was not, however, wholly forgotten. Death brings to the surface many a treasure trove. They float the more easily when not weighed down by that bitterness of which in Bowen there was never a trace.

## II

I imagine that Lord Bowen would have been not a little surprised had he known that the two periodicals for which, in his lean days at the Bar, he wrote articles, would have dwelt after his death on this episodic and, on the whole, unimportant part of his career. But whatever may be said of journalism, which may be content with coarser tools, there can be no doubt that Law robbed Literature of a master when Bowen took to the Bar. He had great scholarship and great reading, and he had with these—what is incomparably more rare—a sense of literary form. It is a thing which most English writers, a few of the greatest excepted, get on comfortably without. A lofty reputation—perhaps ephemeral but still lofty—may be built up without it. The supreme instance at the present moment is Mr. George Meredith, who has many fine intellectual endowments, and either absolutely no notion of what is meant by form and style, or else a complete indifference



to them, and perhaps a hatred of them. The deficiency does not prevent him from gaining an audience and a kind of pious respect from large companies of persons who, till quite recently, knew him not, or heard of him only as an example of eccentricity.

Such a reputation on such a basis as Mr. George Meredith's would be impossible in France. It is not impossible here. Bowen would have—I will not say despised it, since to despise a thing is the cheapest of critical attitudes, but—rejected it for himself. He had the right nature and the right training. He was born with a sense of proportion, a love of symmetry, of balance; with an instinctive preference for the right way of saying a thing. A faulty sentence jarred on him; of an illogical statement he was incapable. He had that literary conscientiousness which impelled him to seek for the best expression of his thought. He was of La Bruyère's opinion, that among all the different ways in which we may express our thought there is one, and one only, which is true and good. Whether he studied French literature carefully I know not, but his writing was of the kind which implied either such studies or the possession of those qualities of mind which, in the Frenchman, make his style what it is.

Bowen was a student of classical literature, and a student on whom Greece and Rome had the same kind of influence which their own literatures had each on their own race. He has left a name at Balliol never to be forgotten. There was hardly a distinction to be won at Oxford which Bowen did not win. The same may be said of others, though not of very many others, and it is unhappily true that some of these gifted and laborious beings squander the energies of a life on what is, after all, or ought to be, but the mere training for

the serious work of life. Not so Bowen. Both at Rugby and at Oxford he became famous for the ease and rapidity with which he acquired knowledge; and not only acquired, but retained it for use. I have been told by one who was with him in those days that Bowen never knew what regular hours were. He gave himself little rest. He hardly slept. For days and weeks he used not to go to bed at all, but would lie down for an hour after many hours of work, wake without effort and resume his task. He was at the same time an athlete, took his full share in athletic sports, and so tried his constitution in two ways at once.

Probably he overrated his strength and undermined it. But constant cerebral activity was to him a condition of existence. Hard work never seemed to stale the freshness of his mind, nor impair its elasticity. The bow was always bent, yet it was always Apollo's. Philosophy and the most abstruse metaphysics were the atmosphere in which he lived. The problems of science were his diversion; he seemed never so much at his ease as when he was working out difficulties from which other men shrunk, or to which they applied themselves by an effort of the will. The same was true in after life of his handling of the law. He delighted in complications and subtleties. He never lost his way among them. Lord Bramwell used to try to puzzle him; for the pleasure of seeing him extricate himself from entanglements which would have kept most men fast bound.

With all this, what left the deepest and most permanent impress on Bowen's mind was the beauty of the literature to which he devoted himself. The beauty sunk into his soul. He was above all else a Virgilian, and the note of *Virgil* is above all else the note of

beauty. It coloured his whole life. It flowed along the years in one unfailing stream, between banks sparkling with flowers; a stream which took a new colour from the rich foliage which it nourished. The beauty, the stateliness of diction, the elevation of thought, the serenity, the even views of life which he found on every page of the Mantuan poet, charmed and fascinated Bowen. When he tried to reproduce all this in English verse he was not wholly successful, though perhaps more successful than others. He tried to achieve the impossible, which he knew to be the impossible. *Virgil* in English ceases to be *Virgil*. He was, however, so far from being discouraged by his rendering of a part of the *Æneid* that he applied himself to a version of the *Georgics*; a poem which is, in one sense, even more untranslatable than the *Æneid*. He said of Dryden's *Virgil* that the silver note of the Latin had been breathed through bronze by the great Englishman. It is an apt metaphor. Perhaps it might be said of his own translation that while it preserved the clear softness of the silver, it had lost some of the ringing harmony and something of the imperial dignity of the original.

During all his life Bowen had the friendship of some of the best men of his time. The relation between him and the late Master of Balliol was of the most intimate kind. The present Home Secretary was his pupil. Mr. Gladstone was his friend, and Lord Bowen was perhaps one of the few friends to whom Mr. Gladstone did not at times seem cold after they had declined to follow him round the sharp curve where the Home Rule signal was first displayed. Lord Rosebery's attachment to him was warm. Those two minds had much in common; the two natures also, and fore-

most among the mourners at the Memorial Service in London was the Prime Minister. Mr. Justice Wright, one of the coolest and best heads on the Bench, was with him just before he died, and so was the Lord Chief Justice. The list would be endless, but I must not omit Mr. Lowell and Mr. Phelps.

Wherever he was known—and he was, of course, very widely known—he was a favourite. Women gathered about him; his manner to them, his knightly soft courtesy, was a thing to see. His conversation varied with his company; its versatility quite as astonishing as its brilliancy. Mr. Lowell—and there was no more exacting judge—used to rank him among the first two or three talkers in London. Often—or as often as he could forget the diplomatic reserve which it was sometimes an effort for him to remember—he put him first. It would be hard to say what was wanting to Bowen's conversation. He had every material ready to his hand—immense stores of knowledge, mother wit, lightness, variety, tact, aptness. And he had charm. His manner was fascinating to others than to women. He had the luminous eye which seemed to be the interpreter of his thoughts and sympathies; a little restless, but never furtive. His self-possession was proof against every experiment.

Withal, he had a manner which did not at all times do justice to the essential firm manliness of his nature. Mrs. Ward in *Marcella* has a description of a pheasant: 'There he was, fine fellow, with his silly, mincing run, redeemed all at once by the sudden whirr of towering flight.' Mincing, perhaps, Bowen could be, but if he ever were it was redeemed by intellectual distinction. None towered higher or more suddenly on the wing. He chose, I thought, this manner as an occasional mask.

More often he laid it aside. But it lent point to the sarcasm of a judge who hated him, and who, to a question about Bowen, made answer that he was 'the most ladylike judge on the Bench.' It matters not. The best lawyer and the best talker of his time must be a target for envious archers. The papers are full of his sayings—most of them genuine. Some of them I heard; but they were so felicitous, so novel, so sparkling, that everybody repeated them and so at last they appear in print. I cannot recall a single one in which I have any private property left.

He was never more delightful than at Homburg. That crowded little German spa is a good ordeal. Many of the ordinary social restraints are relaxed. Etiquette is more flexible. A man is permitted to be, and inevitably is, whether he knows it or not, more himself than in the more starched atmosphere of London. The best or the worst comes out. With Bowen it was the best. His wit and vivacity bubbled and welled out like the Elizabeth Brunnen; as copious and inexhaustible, and with a much more delicate and piquant flavour. He was one of the attractions of the place; it will never be quite the same again.

There are talkers—many of them with a celebrity often deserved—who are talkers and nothing else; just as there are shops in which all the goods are in the front windows. There is no reserve in their bank; they can draw a cheque for just so much and make it go far, but you feel all the while that they are distressingly near the end of their resources. There are others, men of the world or men of letters, or men of anything you please, who have a great sum to their credit which they never use. For all the world benefits by it, they might as well be beggars. Bowen had both. You knew that

his draft would be honoured for any amount, and that no miserliness, no thrift, no impulse of mere frugality, no starving of nature, ever made him hesitate to use what he had freely, and to bestow it freely on others. He never dreamed of hoarding his vast intellectual wealth, or of hiding his talents in a napkin; albeit, in a way, the most modest of men and utterly averse to display. It was this feeling of solidity beneath the polish and the vivid reflections of the surface which made him such a wonderful companion, whether you had him to yourself or shared him with a company. His gaiety was lightsome and buoyant; never frivolous. There was a substance of mind and a substance of character; both elemental and immovable. His vast learning, the riches of his mind, and the lifelong accumulations of the student, were there if you chose to call them forth. If you preferred society gossip, he had that also. But in every circumstance, and through all his flashing and various life, he was the staunch friend, the man of honour and truth, of sweetness and light; and he had a nobility of character only less remarkable than its charm.

## WILLIAM WALTER PHELPS

[LONDON, JUNE 1894]

It seems but the other day that I saw Mr. William Walter Phelps in Berlin, and said something in these columns about his diplomatic work as American Minister to Germany. In truth, it was a year ago, but what is a year? And this morning comes the news that we are never to see him again, in Berlin or elsewhere in that Europe in which, American as he was to the finger tips, he so much delighted and which delighted in him. He is a loss to his country in her relations with Europe, a loss although, had he lived, he might never again have represented her at a European court. For he was one of that none too numerous band of Americans who have a real insight into the affairs and life of this somewhat older continent.

He had lived abroad long enough to comprehend two or three countries ; one of them being his own. I will take the liberty of saying that there are certain particulars in which an American's knowledge of his own country is the better and surer for a residence elsewhere. Whether that will be disputed by the untravelled American I know not. He sometimes disputes propositions on which I should have thought most men of sense were agreed. But Mr. Phelps would not have disputed it. I know what his opinions were. That and many other subjects we have discussed in Berlin, Homburg, and

elsewhere. You know well how strongly he held his opinions and with what tenacity he defended them. It was, I always thought, because they matured slowly in his mind. When he first came abroad he was not quite the same man whom we knew in the later years of his life. He brought with him the usual stock of American prepossessions, and he relinquished his hold on one or another with obvious reluctance. But he had far too much intelligence, and a balance of character much too even, to allow him to remain amid new experiences the victim of old prejudices. His mind opened perhaps in a rather leisurely way, but it opened, and the door once ajar the light poured in in floods.

He came early to see that a patriotism based on comparisons of his own country with others was a broader and purer patriotism than that which closed its eyes as if in terror lest a knowledge of other countries might shake one's allegiance to one's own. To shrink from acknowledging a quality because it was not American, or not exclusively American, seemed to him but a poor tribute to the Republic he loved, and a poor evidence of faith in her institutions. He had within him, moreover, a sense of justice and of honour such as forbade him to deny to Germany what was due to Germany.

It may be said of every able and open-minded American who comes to Europe that Europe is to him an education. If he comes as Minister it is perhaps best of all, for as Minister he has constantly to uphold the interests of his own people while he is learning in the quickest and surest way the distinguishing characteristics among the people to whose Government he is accredited. Most interesting was it to watch the process going on in such a mind as Mr. Phelps's. His Americanism was not one whit less pronounced and



positive at the end of his European career than at the beginning, but it was more enlightened and far more effectual from the missionary point of view ; which was his point of view pretty frequently. I mean that he understood far better after a few years' experience how to appeal to the European mind which he wanted to reach, and which it was his official duty to reach. He was a better Minister as well as a better American.

The truth is so obvious that it may seem needless to insist on it, but it is well, nevertheless, to insist on it and to drive it home. Mr. Phelps himself, in the intensity of his passion for his own people and his loyalty to the ideas which were his and our inheritance, used to dispute this. To dispute it seemed to him a kind of homage which he owed to the flag. It served no other important purpose. He never misled his hearers, nor misled himself for more than a moment.

Indeed, I will venture to say that though he had a trained mind, argument was never his strong point, unless confined to those matters of business or matters of law in which he was an expert. His perceptions were keen ; and he had a power of absorbing as well as of acquiring knowledge. The delicacy of his perception was almost feminine ; a word which, with reference to this subject, I use as a superlative. You cannot praise any man's perceptions more highly than by saying they are feminine. He had that intuitive sense of the truth of things which a clever woman has—perhaps the adjective is needless, for who ever knew a woman who was not clever ? A love of paradox sometimes goes with those shining qualities of mind, and that also Mr. Phelps had. They are perhaps less frequently accompanied by a logical precision in handling the topics of everyday life, such as politics. Not only the imagination but the

emotions affect those strict and strictly intellectual processes which we call logical. Seldom are the two natures combined. The woman may be, for example, a mathematician and a very thorough one. It does not follow that she will apply her mathematics to the affairs of practical life.

So Mr. Phelps, who managed a great property with judgment and success, who was an excellent lawyer, and who went home to take his seat upon the judicial bench to which a Governor of opposite politics had appointed him, used to allow himself in his idler moments the privilege of drawing conclusions for which his premises supplied no logical warrant. He had the most lively sensibilities. Arouse them and argument was thrown away on him. He preferred to be true not only to his convictions but to his feelings; which I for one think a beautiful trait of character.

Had he ever an enemy? I know not; but he had opponents who thought it fair politics—and for aught I know it may have been ‘practical’ politics—to find matter for rather feeble pleasantries in what they thought Mr. Phelps’s personal peculiarities. He did not cut his hair to suit these critics, and he so far swerved from his fidelity to the principles of the American Constitution as to wear a red necktie. They were not satisfied with his manner. He lacked something of the genial ruffianism of the Bowery bar-rooms, and never had it occurred to him that refinement was inconsistent with Republicanism. It must be conceded that he had a true refinement of manner, which was but the outward expression of his refinement of nature and of thought. If he was fastidious in dress it was because he was individual; he wore what pleased him, and did not refrain from wearing it because it did not come up to the

standard set by a New York hack-driver. His personal taste departed from some of the conventional standards commonly accepted in Europe, as well as from those of America. But I never heard that in Europe it was matter of comment. The best society of the best European capitals is less exacting than that of New York; takes more liberties and allows more; and does not deeply concern itself about the colour of a man's scarf, or the material of his jackets. Still less would it be likely to infer that freedom of choice in such details implied any want of strength of character.

Mr. Phelps's memory is in no need of testimonies, and I do not mean what I am going to say as a testimony. But I may remark, for more reasons than one, that the Bowery estimate can hardly be correct in the case of a man who early won and retained to the end the regard of Prince Bismarck. He, if anybody, knew a man when he saw him. No small part of the success of his life's work has been due to his knowledge of men. His judgment of them came as near as anybody's to the unerring. If you asked him to-day whether Mr. Phelps's trousers were designed according to the prevailing pattern in Berlin, he certainly could not tell you. But he would tell you that he was a strong man and a capable Minister, with whom he had transacted much business on a basis satisfactory to both parties; who had served his own country and been respected and loved by the people among whom he lived; and by none more than by the Iron Chancellor himself. All this and more is known in Berlin, but I do not take it at second-hand. I know on what terms of intimacy Mr. Phelps lived, not with Prince Bismarck only but with the whole family. I have seen them in Berlin and in Homburg, where our Minister spent one season while Princess Bismarck was there.

Then, as before and since, Mr. Phelps was an invalid, and it added to the affectionate regard we all bore him to see the courage and sweetness with which he endured the bitter physical trials which beset him. Fortitude is an admirable thing ; most admirable of all in a delicate frame with a supersensitive nervous organisation. There were times when his surgeons and physicians gave him little hope ; never that I saw or ever heard of did they disturb the cheerful serenity with which he faced pain and exhaustion and the prospect of near death.

I have said much more than I intended about the personal qualities and character of this admirable American but I let it stand though it obliges me to pass over in a sentence or two the really distinguished diplomatic career by which he has left a name in Europe. That is known ; the results of it are known ; they are recorded in the archives of the State Department at Washington, and also in Berlin, where the memory of his tact, his mastery of his subjects, his flexibility of method, coupled with an unflinching firmness of purpose, is not confined to the German Ministers and the official world generally with whom he was so much in contact. It is remembered of him also that when he had an end to gain he sometimes stepped outside of the diplomatic groove. He was adventurous, inventive, ready for emergencies, and capable of dealing with them in unexpected ways. The bureaucrat perhaps shook his head ;—he keeps a head in order to shake it, and he is always shocked by a neglect of the conventional. Not so Prince Bismarck or Count Herbert Bismarck, both of whom in their time have done startling things, with but slight deference to humdrum conceptions of etiquette. They liked Mr. Phelps the better for his

occasional independence of the artificial restraints by which weaker men allowed themselves to be fettered.

Altogether, he has left his mark in Berlin; in many worlds of that huge, active, multifarious capital toward which all Germany converges. In some respects it is for a Minister or Ambassador one of the most trying of all European posts. To have spent four years there and to leave behind him a reputation for probity, for force of character, for social ascendancy, for the special kind of ability which a diplomatist usually acquires by the long training and traditions which are wanting and must be wanting to an American—this is a high achievement. All this and more is to be said of Mr. Phelps, and when it has been said there remains a tribute of a different and more personal kind which all who knew him would offer still more gladly. It is not permissible to say in print all one would like to say, but I do not conceive how any writer who knew him could suppress altogether the avowal of the deep personal attachment he inspired. Even a journalist may lay his wreath on the grave of a lamented and honoured friend.

## PRESIDENT CARNOT

[LONDON, JUNE 1894]

WITH the halo of martyrdom about his head, the murdered President of the French Republic attains an immortality to which mere criticism has little to say. It is difficult even to attempt a cool judgment of his real character—either of the President or of the man. We have only to remember the emotion which the death of President Garfield caused ; an emotion honourable to him and to his country. Some of the more cynical journalists say that little deep feeling is discernible in Paris. It is incredible. One's respect and liking for the French nation make it impossible to believe such an assertion. They owe a tribute to their dead chief. The civilised world owes one, and pays it. Europe knows very well that M. Carnot was a good President ; honest, honourable, often wise ; a lover of France, but also a lover of peace and of European concord, and doing in the perplexing circumstances of many difficult hours much to secure both, and to put or to keep international relations on a safe footing. A just homage to his memory comes from every quarter of the globe. His name stands, and will always stand, so high that he can well afford to endure a more critical estimate than anybody would yet undertake.

If we look at President Carnot apart from his services to France and his official position he will appear

rather a respectable than an interesting figure. He was not picturesque, not impressive, not even sympathetic, in presence of any great company of people. I have seen him in various circumstances; at the opening of the French Exhibition of 1889, at a military review in Versailles, at the Elysée on a great reception night, and elsewhere. You have to imagine to yourself a man rather below medium height, rather well-made, rather good-looking, with a face and head of which the lines were regular enough, the eyes and hair and full beard dark, and the prevailing expression or effect of the whole one of immobility. There seemed to be nothing spontaneous about him. Everything was considered and correct. He was correctly dressed, his hair and beard were correctly cut, so were his clothes; and he moved, though there was nothing military about him, with the precision and something of the stiffness of a soldier on parade. There was always a suggestion that he had been taught, or had taught himself, to do the particular thing he was doing. Evidently, he set great store by deportment. He had a high idea of what became the Chief Magistrate of France, and he lived laboriously up to his ideal.

Nobody who ever met him or talked with him, or who came in contact with him in any way, would doubt that he had a perfectly honest character. Rectitude was stamped on his face, every line of it, and his look and bearing testified beyond mistake to his entire uprightness of purpose and of act. He was an honest man in a post which demanded honesty first of all. He would have been perfectly incapable of saying as Disraeli said when a new-comer in the House of Commons was described to him as, among other things, honest: 'Oh, damn his honesty. We've very little

use for that sort of thing here.' He valued this trait of character in himself and in others. It had, however, one effect on him, and on his *tenue*, which is not so uncommon as might be supposed. It led him to think certain things of less consequence than they really were. The executive of a great nation does not live by honesty alone. He needs other great qualities—force of character, authority, commanding qualities, and the power of impressing himself on others and bending them to his will. It can hardly be said of Carnot that he possessed these. He had, however, firmness, and was extremely difficult to persuade or convince. His mind was not an open one; not flexible, not readily apprehensive of new conditions under which he was sometimes called on rather suddenly to take grave decisions.

He has had, for example, some eight or nine parliamentary crises to deal with. It was not thought in France or here that he always took the constitutional view of his duties. Statesmen familiar with the theory of parliamentary Government as practised in most European countries hold it to be the duty of the head of the State, when a Ministry is overthrown, to send for the leader of the party by whom it is overthrown and ask him to form a new Ministry. M. Carnot did this sometimes, and sometimes did not. He would never send for M. Clémenceau. It is hard to blame him. Perhaps it is not necessary to blame him. He felt, and I think rightly felt, that M. Clémenceau was a danger to the State, and he preferred to disregard strict theories of constitutional and parliamentary law rather than make a Socialistic Radical President of the Council. It was quite useless to tell him that the surest way to use up M. Clémenceau was to ask him to form a Ministry; to explain that it was doubtful whether he



would succeed, and to assure him that if he succeeded it was certain his Ministry would be short-lived. That was not M. Carnot's way of looking at things. It seemed to him safer to keep the extremist outside. He did not care to recognise the Reds as a party in the country, or their leader as within the pale of Ministerial politics. And so, while M. Clémenceau was the greatest figure in the Chamber, the unmaker if not the maker of Ministry after Ministry, the portfolio of President of the Council remained beyond his grasp.

The result was to alter the balance of powers in the Constitution. Parliamentary Government, as understood elsewhere in Europe, was superseded at times by Presidential Government; or, if not superseded, modified. The Chamber of Deputies became a less power and the President a greater power than was intended. It was a slight, though only a slight, approach to the American system. But the American system is one thing and the parliamentary system another, and the two cannot be worked together. M. Carnot never made an attempt to carry on with a Ministry which had lost the confidence of the Chamber. He regarded a hostile vote of the Chamber as a sentence of death upon the Ministry at which it had been aimed. He could not do otherwise. But he shrank from the logical consequence when the logical consequence was M. Clémenceau. After a time, Panama and M. Cornelius Herz saved him all further trouble with the rather too enterprising leader of the Left.

Equally narrow was M. Carnot's view in another direction. He conceived of the Republic as a government of the people by a part of the people. No doubt there was a period, and a long period, in the history of the Republican party in France when this was a neces-

sary view. 'A Republic without Republicans,' was at one moment a true enough description of France, or as true as an epigram ever is. It was long true that the Republicans were in a minority, and true long after Thiers had recommended the Republic as 'the form of government which divides us the least.' The Republic seemed to exist more by help of the inherent vitality of its principle than by support from without, or than by the loyalty of the French people—and especially French politicians—to the idea. It was a long time before the danger of a recrudescence of a Legitimist or Bonapartist majority vanished. Boulangism was its last sputter, and Boulangism excepted it may be doubted whether at any time after M. Carnot's election to the Presidency, in December 1887, the danger was very great. But it remained real to him. Among the watchwords or catchwords which took the strongest hold on his mind was 'concentration.' What that meant was an electoral union of all the Republican groups against all the Legitimist, Orleanist, and Bonapartist groups. That policy was steadily carried out, and was successful. The Republican majority in the Chamber grew steadily greater at successive elections until finally it became overwhelming, and the Monarchists themselves saw that the game was up.

Then began the so-called 'rallying' movement, a name which almost sounds as if borrowed from American politics. A strong section of the Monarchists 'rallied' to the Republic. The Catholics were helped on by the Pope; the Royalists by the absence of a leader, and all by the conviction that the Republic was established and that men who wished to serve their country or cared for a political future had no choice but to accept the Republic. Moreover, it was still to be determined

whether the Republic was to be conservative and lasting, or Socialistic, and so go the way of other experiments in anarchy, and the rallied Royalists were of course conservative. They were ready to join hands with the Opportunists or Moderates; the body of which M. Carnot himself was in a sense the leader.

But to all this he was blind, or, if not blind, his prejudices were too inveterate to be overcome. He would have nothing to say to the rallied. He clung to concentration. He seemed really to believe that it was not only possible but for the interest of the Republic that it should be run by a party. He repelled the men who were ready to support it. Nobody was more alive than he was, as he showed again and again, to the dangers of Radicalism; of Socialistic Radicalism above all. But he was haunted by the spectre of Royalism. He had seen it looking over his shoulder, and to him, long after most men perceived that it had been laid to rest, it remained a living and terrible thing, with infinite capacity for mischief. The decrease of the Royalist minority of deputies and the very marked and alarming increase of Socialist deputies at the last election may have taught him a lesson, but if so, too late to be of use. He had, no doubt, a kind of patient sagacity, but not much foresight, not much statesmanship save of that negative kind for which timidity is another name, and which, by force of clinging to what is in dread of what may be, comes to be known as Conservatism.

If ever President Carnot's character served him in good stead it was during the Panama crisis. There can be no doubt that he was struck at through Panama, and that a concerted attempt to discredit the Republic by discrediting the chief pillar of the Republic was then

made. Intriguers of more parties than one were concerned in that ignoble cabal. There was a moment when it looked as if it might succeed, and when, if the attack on the President had come to anything, the whole fabric of government might have crumbled. Then, not for the first time but more clearly than ever, the value of M. Carnot's spotless integrity became clear. It is often the case in France—it has been so for more than a hundred years—that suspicion does the work of proof. The readiness of the French to believe ill of each other is a stain upon their national character and upon the race, but it is a trait which ever since the Revolution has passed from the atmosphere of courts, where it was bred, into the life of the people. Let loose a calumny and it will run its course. Few are the men who can stand against it. M. Carnot was one. He had been already for five years a target for the poisonous malevolence of the most licentious press in the world. Yet so complete was the conviction of his uprightness that scandal was a useless weapon against him, and Messrs. Drumont and Detaille and their confederates perceived that they must allege something in the nature of evidence if they were to shake the popular belief in the President. They produced what they had and it was nothing. It was instantly confuted, though it needed no confuting, and when this had collapsed Paris stood waiting breathless for what was to follow. People could not believe the danger over, or that a conspiracy so infamous had been hatched out of such rotten eggs as these. But there was nothing more. The Republic was safe, and it was the stainless and unstainable name of its Chief Magistrate which had been the salvation of the State. He has rendered many other services to France, great services which

will live in his memory. But this was greatest of all.

What the French liked in President Carnot was what the English like in the Queen; the domestic side of his life. He was a good husband and a good father. The domestic circle at the Elysée was known to be a happy one. The English will probably continue to believe to the end of time that the French have no homes and that family ties are weaker in France than here. The contrary is nevertheless true, and it was pre-eminently true in the case of the Carnot family. His household was well ordered. His servants liked him. He was considerate to his staff, to the officials with whom he came in contact, to everybody.

His immense elevation never turned his head, and I do not know that there is a better proof of his solidity of character than that. Human nature is but too susceptible to these uplifting influences. Nothing is more common than to see a man raised, and especially if he be suddenly raised, to a great post, intoxicated by promotion. To the occupants of all such posts there comes necessarily a certain amount of deference; often of adulation. It is openly shown. The man has not been accustomed to it. He forgets to compute how large a part of it is shown to the office and how little is meant for the man. His predecessor had it, and much the same sort of homage will be offered with the same outward marks of respect to his successor, and to the successor who shall come after him, and so on. Yet the individual who for the time being happens to bear the title is flattered and apt to think some exceptional honour is shown to him individually.

Not so M. Carnot, although his election to the Presidency of the Republic, beyond question one of the

most splendid positions in the world, lifted him out of something very like obscurity. He was a compromise candidate. He owed his election on that memorable afternoon of the 3rd of December at Versailles to the irreconcilable rivalry between M. Jules Ferry and M. de Freycinet, each of whom succeeded in making the success of the other impossible. True, M. Carnot had been twice Minister, but almost everybody in France has been Minister. He was the Franklin Pierce of French politics. The Radicals, however, were the immediate instruments of his elevation. They not only hated but dreaded Jules Ferry. They saw in him, and rightly, the incarnation of the principle of authority. He would have been King Stork; they wanted King Log, and they picked out M. Carnot for that part. They wanted a weak President whom they could mould to their own purposes, or, failing that, cajole or bully. Bitterly were they disappointed when they found that they had mistaken their man, and that Carnot, though he might lack initiative and many other things, had an abundance of that quiet courage and unbending sense of duty which were so well fitted to baffle the enemies of the Government.

Neither abroad nor at home did President Carnot excite enthusiasm. It was not his mission in life to set pulses beating at fever-heat. Nobody thought of him as a great President or a great popular leader, or as one of those men who sometimes gather up a great State in the hollow of the hand and launch it at some other power, or take the lead in a crusade. If he had been a man of any one of those types, he would still have found himself curiously hampered by the constitution under which he held office. A President of the French Republic has but a little of the power of a President of the

United States. He is, to a very large extent, ornamental. He has to represent the Republic. It is an odd variation upon official duties, but it is quite true that one part of his business was to make progresses from time to time through the country, and to visit great cities or important political centres. It was upon such an errand as this that he met his death; dying, as the German Emperor said, like a soldier on the battlefield. The German Emperor is somewhat too prone to flourish his sword in the faces of mankind, and the military metaphor has its dangers, but on this occasion the Emperor said well and the military metaphor was apt.

President Carnot's life at the Elysée has been much and deservedly praised. He had the good fortune to succeed M. Grévy, whose parsimony had become a byword long before the Wilson scandal drove him from office. M. Grévy, already a rich man, became richer by his meanness. He had a large sum allotted him for hospitalities and social ceremonies and other expenses of what the French call 'representation,' much of which he put into his own well-filled pocket. M. Carnot reformed that. He entertained freely and gave freely. It has been said rather loosely since his death that he and Mme. Carnot had succeeded in making the Palace of the Elysée a social headquarters. It was hardly that. The Faubourg St. Germain and the Rue du Faubourg St. Honoré remained still a long way apart. If anybody of great position accomplished the journey from the one to the other, the fact was noted and commented on. The tastes of neither the President nor his wife led them to compete with the social exclusiveness of the old aristocracy, nor to care very much, perhaps, whether they remained exclusive or not. He may have undervalued the political efficacy of social authority. He and his wife

belonged to the upper middle class; the class out of which comes most that is best and most fruitful in modern life.

There was, indeed, something democratic about the hospitalities of the Elysée. When the wife of an English Foreign Minister issues 2500 invitations to a reception on the Queen's Birthday, the limits of the gregarious are thought to have been reached. But the invitations to a reception at the Elysée have been known to exceed 6000. It is a spacious palace, though the corridors are rather narrow, but hardly spacious enough to give 6000 guests ample room for circulation; or for the dance which follows. In one point it was not democratic. Certain rooms were set apart for diplomatists and other distinguished personages. Into these the democracy might not penetrate, and there were occasionally signs that they resented their exclusion. They need not have resented it. The diplomatists were packed almost as tightly as the rest. Diplomatists and democracy had, moreover, the same reception from the President and Mme. Carnot. The patience of the Presidential host and hostess was admirable, and so was their evident effort to convey to each unit of these thronging thousands, personally unknown most of them, the impression that he or she was welcome, and that their coming on such an occasion was a personal favour. The French passion for equality was gratified to the full. It was impossible that these huge crushes should be what was called brilliant. They had a better use. They gave pleasure to those whom they were intended to please. And they afforded an excellent opportunity to the American on her travels to see how badly Frenchwomen of the middle class can dress when they try.



What has been said in England of the murder and of the victim of this latest Anarchist outrage has been, for the most part, well said. The indignation is genuine, the respect for President Carnot is general and profound, the sympathy with France is genuine. On the whole, one might hope that it would promote a better feeling on the part of France toward England, and lessen the animosity which the French cherish, and which of late has been growing more bitter, more explosive, more dangerous. The demonstration of English goodwill does seem to make an impression. One can only hope it will be lasting.

## THE PRIME MINISTER

[LONDON, AUGUST 1894]

### I

WHEN Sieyès was asked what he had done during the Reign of Terror, he made answer: '*J'ai vécu.*' If the Prime Minister were asked a similar question about his Ministry during the session of Parliament just ended, he might make a similar answer. It would not be a complete answer, for he and his Ministry have done some very considerable things. But they entered upon their career amid the most sinister and general predictions of disaster. Their opponents—and conspicuously Mr. Chamberlain, whose knowledge of practical politics is equal to anybody's—made no secret of their belief that they should be able within a very short time to force the Government to dissolve or to resign and, if they dissolved, to beat them at the polls.

It is the fact that all these anticipations, numerous as they were, have come to nought which makes the continued existence of Lord Rosebery's Ministry the most remarkable circumstance in its history. I can imagine there may have been a moment when Lord Rosebery might well have dreaded lest some historian in the future should apply to him and his tenure of office the stinging epigram of Disraeli upon the 'transient and embarrassed phantom of Lord Goderich.' Lord Goderich was crushed, as it were, between Canning whom he succeeded in August 1827, and the

Duke of Wellington who became Prime Minister in January 1828. Lord Rosebery succeeds to a greater than Canning, but there is no Duke of Wellington to follow him nor does he in the least resemble Lord Goderich. The peril of the epigram, at any rate, which turned in part upon the shortness of Lord Goderich's Ministry, is over. Parliament is out of the way till next January, and there is no perceptible reason why the Rosebery Government should not remain in office till it has reached and passed the anniversary of its accession.

You have heard a good deal about the decay of Lord Rosebery's prestige. There are plenty of critics to tell you he has lost the confidence of the country which was shown in such a striking way when he succeeded Mr. Gladstone, that he has disappointed expectation, that his party is dissatisfied with him, and that Sir William Harcourt has become the most commanding figure in the Ministry of which Lord Rosebery is the nominal head. These and many other solemnities are repeated by the opponents till the frequency of the repetition has its usual effect. People believe the assertions because they have heard them so often. They hardly stop to ask themselves whether they are made by interested witnesses; still less do they take the trouble to examine the facts for themselves. If there be a shred or scrap of truth as foundation for this towering superstructure of inference and allegation, they hardly think of disputing the inference or denying the allegation. Scraps and shreds of truth there certainly are, and it is worth while to separate them and look at them by themselves and see how much they are worth and what they amount to when sifted.

No man ever became Prime Minister of England in circumstances quite similar to those which prevailed when the mantle of Mr. Gladstone fell upon Lord Rosebery. I remarked at the time that he inherited a Parliament, a Cabinet, and a policy. It has now to be added that he inherited Sir William Harcourt; a fact extremely necessary to be kept in mind. It was obvious that he came into office fettered. He had neither a free hand nor the full authority essential, if not to the discharge of his duties, to do justice to himself. His majority in Parliament, such as it was, had been elected upon issues which he did not frame. His Cabinet had been formed by his predecessor, and the policy which he was under a moral obligation to carry out was largely personal; that is to say, it had been imposed upon what was left of the Liberal party by the most masterful and autocratic political leader known to modern English history. I know nothing of any private compacts nor whether any such existed, but it is obvious that the resignation of Mr. Gladstone, his nomination—for that is what it came to—of Lord Rosebery as his successor, and Lord Rosebery's acceptance both of the office and of the colleagues bequeathed to him, left him anything but a free agent in the sense in which most Prime Ministers are free agents in public affairs.

Note further that there have been from the beginning at least four separate sets of critics all of whom had a direct interest in disparaging Lord Rosebery and his administration. First, the Opposition; that is what every Prime Minister has to meet. Second, the partisans of his defeated competitor, if competitor he can be called, Sir William Harcourt. That is in English politics unusual. It has been usual in this country for a man either to accept defeat inside his

own party loyally, or go outside and carry on a campaign with flags flying. Third, the Radicals, some of them in the Cabinet, who desire before all things to end the House of Lords and who have never ceased their efforts to compel Lord Rosebery to do their will, or their attacks on him when they found he would not. Fourth and lastly, the Irish Nationalists. It is not the least significant fact in the situation that the session should have begun and ended with an Irish revolt ; and we may as well look fairly at the first of these two outbreaks, for the key of the parliamentary position is, and always has been and is likely long to be, on the Irish Nationalist benches.

When Lord Rosebery uttered in the House of Lords, on his first appearance as Prime Minister, his memorable sentence about the predominant partner, he undoubtedly put the parliamentary life of his new-born Ministry at issue. He made the future of Home Rule dependent upon the conversion of England, the predominant partner, to the doctrine of self-government in Ireland. The Irish knew very well that England was against them ; that they had a hostile majority of seventy-one in the House of Commons to overcome, and they saw no prospect of overcoming it. They therefore thought, and they were right in thinking, that for the Prime Minister to say there could be no Home Rule in Ireland till England was willing, was equivalent to saying there would be no Home Rule so long as Lord Rosebery was Prime Minister. They thereupon naturally gave notice that, if this view were adhered to, the Irish vote in the House of Commons was no longer at the disposal of the Ministry. They are not to be blamed for that. The matter hung in suspense till Lord Rosebery went down to Edinburgh and explained his House of Lords declaration in a sense

which satisfied the Irish, or which, to be more accurate, induced them to continue, or to renew, their alliance for parliamentary purposes with the Rosebery Ministry.

They then had, and perhaps still have, a hope that this alliance may prove fruitful of good works—that is, of works fruitful from the Irish point of view. But as the session drew on, they saw that all the important bills which the Lords had allowed to pass since the beginning of the Gladstone Ministry were English bills, such as Parish Councils and Equalisation of Rates, or Scotch, like the Scotch Local Government Bill. They seem then to have made up their minds that no legislation such as the Irish Nationalists desired could be had until one of two things had happened. Either the Government must dissolve Parliament, and come back with a clear mandate from the people to which the Lords would yield, or the Lords themselves must be got out of the way. They knew that the Government, on the very end of a session through which they had lived from hand to mouth, and just as a peaceful six months lay before them, would not dissolve, and that the result would be very doubtful if they did. They therefore summoned the Ministry to take up the mandate of the Leeds Conference, for want of a better, and open fire on the Upper House. And they themselves, by way of a beginning, or perhaps a signal, suddenly blazed out against the clerks of the Upper House, whose salaries they came within nine votes of inducing the House of Commons to refuse. Between the unhappy clerks and their Irish tormentors stood the Ministry, but the Irish guns belched forth flame and smoke just the same, and even let fly a shell or two which burst over the heads of the astounded occupants of the Treasury bench and put them to flight. They rallied,

and the Irish ceased firing, but the second Irish revolt had occurred, and had produced a deep impression; a phrase which may stand as a polite circumlocution for panic.

Such were the circumstances in which Lord Rosebery's Ministry began life, and such the circumstances in which it was able to prorogue Parliament. They might of themselves explain a great part of the diminution of authority which is thought to have occurred between the two dates. But there is a great deal more than that. Lord Rosebery is chief of a party—I do not now include the Irish, who strictly are not members of his party, but allies—which is composed of a dozen different factions. As a party it does not know its own mind. Each of its factions is quarrelling for legislative precedence. Each wants its own bill put first, and each tries to exact from the Government a pledge that at the head of the Government programme shall be installed the particular measure most dear to each. The Welsh have succeeded. Disestablishment is to come first next session. The Labour men, who want eight hours and many other things; the machine men, who want a vast caucus measure carried; the temperance men, who want a local veto bill—these and many more are more or less discontented. Do you think it a slight matter to keep the peace between all these contending sections? If you do, you may be sure that Lord Rosebery does not, and that no Prime Minister who ever lived would think so.

Behind all else lies the same question which the Irish pressed, the House of Lords question, and the general position is still more singular than the particular one which most concerned the partisans of Home Rule. For, in the first place, the Cabinet is notoriously divided on

the method of dealing with the question, if not on the question itself. Secondly, the most ardent supporters of Lord Rosebery in the Press, and to some extent in the party, are precisely those who differ from him most widely. The matter is discussed here, and also in America, as if it were a simple problem of politics ; as if the Liberal party had only to make up its mind in order to have its way. Ministers know better. They know that if they once resolve to embark upon this voyage, a long and perilous journey lies before them, with rocks and shallows at every turn, and head winds and seas day and night. They know very well that a mistake at starting might be fatal to the adventure, and might wreck them and their ship.

The more ardent souls whose responsibility is less and whose knowledge is less, make light of all these dangers and difficulties. They are so sure of success in an enterprise of which they have never counted the cost nor determined the course, that they are almost ready to fly at the throat of the more prudent captain who knows perfectly well that if he yields to their clamour and makes a false move, they will equally fly at his throat at the first check. He knows, and they know, that the mandate he asked for from the country has never been given ; and know how hollow was the imposture of the Leeds Conference which tried to pretend it was the country. What the caucus-mongers really rely upon is the appeal to prejudice and passion and to party interest and class interest which they mean to make if they can once force their leaders to take this leap in the dark.

Any American who has considered Lord Rosebery's position in the light of these facts, must have said to himself that it was natural, if not inevitable, that he



should fail to deal with them all in a way to satisfy everybody. The facts, the political situation, the irreconcilable antagonisms by which he is surrounded, are quite enough to account for a certain falling-off in the enthusiasm which welcomed him to office. He foresaw it, and it is no secret—at any rate it is true—that he took office with reluctance and not till after more than one refusal had been overruled. No doubt, a great statesman, a man of real political genius with courage and good fortune and some of the spirit of Montrose, might have met these difficulties in a mood and by methods different from Lord Rosebery's, but only on one condition. I will illustrate what I mean by a hypothesis.

In America you all accept Mr. Gladstone as a statesman and a man of real political genius, and neither there nor here was his courage ever doubted. But let us suppose that Mr. Gladstone had been in the House of Lords and not in the House of Commons. Let us suppose further that he had been compelled to confide the leadership of his party in the Commons, the true centre of political authority in this country so far as authority is governmental, to a defeated rival who remained a candidate for the office he had missed and had behind him a considerable and an extremely bitter and unscrupulous personal following. What do you think would have become of Mr. Gladstone's authority in these circumstances? Remember that by far the largest part of Mr. Gladstone's ascendancy in his party was due to his unrivalled parliamentary ability—due, in other words, to his power of managing the House of Commons—and that if he had been in the House of Lords he could not have managed the House of Commons. That body can only be led from within. Lord

Rosebery is without. He has never had for one single moment the chance which Mr. Gladstone had throughout every one of his four administrations. And Mr. Gladstone never had at any moment of his career the difficulties which have confronted Lord Rosebery. If you are going to draw a comparison between the elder and the younger statesman, those points must be taken into account. A comparison which omits the essential facts is of no value. Nor is any comparison of much value, nor do I for my part make one. I only suggest considerations to those who do.

Lord Salisbury may be alleged as an instance to the contrary. But the instance is of no analogy, for two reasons. First, when Lord Salisbury is in power the majority of the House of Commons and the majority of the House of Lords are of the same mind, instead of being utterly hostile to each other, as now. Second, the Conservative majority in the Commons is led by Lord Salisbury's most intimate and trusted personal and political friend. Mr. Balfour and Lord Salisbury are, for political purposes, almost as one man; at any rate, they have entire confidence in each other, and there is no party in the Commons caballing to replace Lord Salisbury by Mr. Balfour. But the Liberal majority in the Commons is led by Sir William Harcourt. I impute nothing to him, but the personal estrangement between him and Lord Rosebery is only too well known, and among Sir William's followers are men who would stick at nothing to do Lord Rosebery an ill turn. His compulsory absence from the House of Commons is of itself, therefore, a sufficient explanation of many of the troubles which have beset his Ministry.

## II

To the list of disadvantages with which Lord Rosebery set out on his career as Prime Minister may be added another. He had a reputation hard to live up to. He was known to be Mr. Gladstone's choice. He was known to be the Queen's choice. He was known to be the choice of a great majority of his colleagues in the Cabinet, and of the Liberal party in the House of Commons. And he was borne into office not merely by these concurring influences, but by the breath of popular applause and the general agreement of the people of England that he was, among all possible Liberals, the man for this great post. Two of these suffrages may be called permanent. There is no reason to doubt that the Queen and Mr. Gladstone are of the same mind now as when the present Government was formed. So, probably, are the majority of the Cabinet and of the Liberal party in the House of Commons. If there be any doubt about the latter it arises from the circumstances I explained in a recent letter,—cabals, competition between cliques, conflicting claims for priority for particular bills, and the like. But these are not sufficient reasons for doubting the substantial loyalty of the majority to their leader. If they were, many of them would operate as strongly against Sir William Harcourt as against Lord Rosebery.

But Lord Rosebery's popular prestige was no doubt, and is, an embarrassment, because prestige of that kind is always subject to reaction, and peculiarly so in the case of a young and, in one sense, unknown man. Youth might, in the beginning, add to his prestige. Later would come, and did come, the demand that it should be sustained, not merely by ability and compet-

ence but by a series of brilliant political successes. Now brilliant political successes depend in part on fortune, and in very great part on conditions over which no individual has control. If I use the word unknown with reference to Lord Rosebery, it is in the sense that he has never been fully understood, and that some of his great reputation rested, so to speak, on hearsay evidence. That part of it which was most solid and demonstrable did rest mainly on hearsay—I mean his conduct of the Foreign Affairs of this country.

This it was which first attracted the regard of the Queen; probably the best judge in the kingdom on this point and some others. Mr. Gladstone would know less and care less about the work of the Foreign Minister. The majority of the Cabinet less again. The majority in the House of Commons next to nothing. It is a parochial majority. The general public can only judge by what I called hearsay evidence, and by accomplished results. They may or may not have heard of the Queen's high opinion of Lord Rosebery as Foreign Minister. They are still less likely to have known of the impression he made on the permanent chiefs of the Foreign Office itself, who, next to the Queen, are the best judges in England, while the great reputation he had won abroad would either never reach or not greatly affect Englishmen at home—average Englishmen. They came to know somehow or other that they were well served, but they would have been puzzled to say how they knew it, or to give a sufficient reason for the faith that was in them. They were, nevertheless, perfectly right.

Among other foundations of Lord Rosebery's great renown were his speeches and his work in the London County Council. His oratory had made an impression,

especially in Scotland, where he is always at his best. He has made many good speeches; some that were excellent; one or two of surpassing excellence. But he has never yet done himself full justice. He has in him the true oratorical gift. He relies on it too much, and relies too much on his quickness of mind and power of improvisation. Of course he has always had many things to do besides making speeches, and sometimes things of more real practical importance than speech-making. But this is an age of talk, an age of debate, an age of speechmaking in and out of Parliament, and there is perhaps nothing which more surely or speedily fixes a man's place in public life—I mean his popular reputation—than his power to debate or power on the platform. It is worth a Minister's while to sacrifice, if need be, something else in order to secure this kind of celebrity. Lord Rosebery has it, but not in the highest degree, and not in the degree to which he would be entitled if he resolutely devoted his best faculties and enough of his undivided energies to the preparation of his most important public orations. As for the chairmanship of the London County Council, it is already a thing of the past. It was more effective in London than elsewhere, and even in London it was a municipal reputation; of the highest order, but still municipal. As chairman, Lord Rosebery showed tact in controlling and coaxing a very unruly and half-broken team; great mastery of business and power of work; and he governed London. But London is not the Empire, and so, when the people who had acclaimed him on his entrance upon the business of governing a great Empire, asked themselves a little later what his titles to their confidence were, they could not rely wholly on London.

Besides all this, Lord Rosebery has always been

surrounded with a certain mystery. He is, in serious matters, one of the most reserved men who ever lived. He is a thinker, and with all his power of quick decision he broods long over the graver problems of politics which present themselves to him. He takes few men into his confidence ; perhaps none completely. He has long been the intimate associate of Mr. Gladstone, whose mind is an unexplored labyrinth to which no man ever yet found the clue. Mr. Gladstone's influence on his younger friend has therefore been, at times, of doubtful advantage. It has confirmed him in some mental habits which were already quite strong enough. The hold which the late Liberal leader acquired on the minds, and still more on the imaginations, of his followers and of the country, was acquired not because of, but in spite of, his taste for mystification and hedging. I do not mean that Lord Rosebery has imitated his mentor in these particulars. Imitation is a conscious act. But he has, consciously or unconsciously, come under the spell which none of Mr. Gladstone's constant or frequent associates ever escaped.

Yet I think Mr. Gladstone should be treated as the exception ; as a being apart, not as a model, and not as a good guide to public life. There is another type. There are men of simple natures who speak out, whether from an irresistible sincerity of mind or from the commanding character which has confidence in itself and in its rectitude, and a belief that things will come right if you follow a straight line. Chatham was such a man. The Duke of Wellington was another. If a young politician has to go to school, either of them is a good master. Washington is a third. Mr. Gladstone is, intellectually speaking, more a Greek or an Italian than

an Englishman. Nor is he an Englishman. He has told us himself he is pure Scotch. Lord Rosebery also is a Scot—reason the more why he should emancipate himself from Scottish influences. He has all the Scottish traits he needs; subtlety of mind, shrewdness, caution, patience, and a certain distrustfulness of nature to which perhaps is attributable that habit of reserve which I mentioned above. In politics, as in literature and other matters, a man will do well to submit himself to authority of a kind as unlike as possible to that which he himself wields, and to influences which supply his own deficiencies, not to those which augment his natural bias.

Lord Rosebery is the soul of honour. No man could better afford to take his countrymen into his confidence. He has clear views. No man could better afford to state them clearly. He has a good judgment of circumstances and tendencies. No man would be more likely to hit upon the right moment for announcing a policy. With all this, he is a diplomatist by training as well as by birth—for I take it that all Scots are born diplomatists and born with a dose of distrust of other men. He has therefore, by no will of his own and perhaps to his own surprise, come to be looked upon as reluctant to disclose himself fully. The country recognises his directness of purpose and strength of will; knows very well that it is being led somewhere, and is not quite sure where.

No more was it under Mr. Gladstone, but Mr. Gladstone was eighty-four and Lord Rosebery is forty-seven. There is a difference. The elder had behind him sixty years of public life, with all their accustomed titles to confidence. The younger, because he is younger, has most of his yet to earn. Mr. Gladstone was not Prime

Minister till he was fifty-nine, and he had been a Cabinet Minister twenty-three years before that. Lord Rosebery's first acquaintance with the Cabinet is hardly more than ten years old. The mere intervals of time and spaces of experience are enormous if you look at the careers of the two men. The country is quite aware that it has a young Prime Minister. I think the people of England are disposed to be fair to him, and beyond doubt well disposed to him, in spite of their disappointments in some particulars of exaggerated expectation. But people do take account of the discrepancies I have noted, and they do think themselves entitled to more openness of speech, and to be assured that the policy of the present Ministry shall be, in so far as the Prime Minister has the direction of it, definite and frankly put before the country for acceptance or rejection.

The entire direction of policy he has not. Few Prime Ministers ever had; perhaps none for any length of time. How Lord Rosebery is hampered I have explained pretty fully before—not quite fully, for reasons which have some reference to the personal relations between himself and one or two of his colleagues. Some things are better left unsaid, even in a distant land. Nothing can be gained by dwelling on the want of harmony between him and the leader of the House of Commons. So far as it exists it is a serious obstacle to the smooth working of the Ministry and to the successful development of a considered policy. But when all allowances have been made for that and for the other hindrances on which I dwelt, there remains the fact that Lord Rosebery is Prime Minister. He is judged as such, and will be judged as such hereafter. He has, in my belief, a great part to play. If you hold him



responsible for the hesitations and uncertainties of the last six months, no doubt he must accept it. Everything rests ultimately on him. At the same time, neither contemporary chronicles nor the history which passes its verdict upon a period can be written without taking account of circumstances. It will not be history if it is written in that way. Neither will history limit herself to the last six months. If Lord Rosebery has made mistakes, he has plenty of time before him in which to retrieve them, and to recover all and more than all the prestige with which he had set out.

My own view is that, excepting the predominant partner passage in the House of Lords and the attempt to explain it away at Edinburgh, there is very little in the confusions of the period which need be attributed to the Prime Minister, or in which he was a free agent. But if there were much more I should still look to the future just as hopefully. I say hopefully, because, though I probably differ from Lord Rosebery on most public questions, I do think and have always thought, that what a country, any country, most needs is a man capable of governing—not a Bismarck, necessarily, nor a Lincoln—they are the two most sharply contrasted types—but a Minister, or President, or party leader, or whatever he may be, who has mastered the fundamental principle that the business of a Government is to govern, and of a leader to lead. If his lot be cast in a democracy, he must no doubt contrive to govern by and through the democracy, but he will still govern and still lead. I think Lord Rosebery such a man. If he were a Minister who believed in letting things drift, who had no settled purpose or policy, who was a mere opportunist and nothing more, he would cease to interest me as Minister. He would hold, inevitably,

a subordinate place, whether you called him Prime Minister or not.

He may seem to have been subordinate and not predominant at certain rather critical moments of late. The whole truth is not known, and any judgment is premature. But, if you like, I will make you a present of these few months. They are no long time in the history of a man and still less of a State. Let them go. The interesting period is the future; perhaps the near future during which more than one momentous decision may have to be taken. But the future stretches on. There will come a period when Lord Rosebery will have a fair trial and a free hand; when he will have made his appeal to the country, when he will have his own Cabinet, his own majority, and an opportunity to enforce his own policy. The other policy, the inherited policy, may have to work itself out meantime. Whether it succeeds or fails—and I believe it will fail—it will be out of the way. Then we shall be able to see whether Lord Rosebery has the constructive genius and the political authority which some of us believe are his. Till then he may remain an enigma, his career may be clouded, his true character or his real force of government and leadership be left doubtful. It is idle to predict. All I mean to say is that my conception of Lord Rosebery as a statesman, and my belief in his capacity for leadership, are what they were when he became Prime Minister.

## MR. FROUDE

[LONDON, OCTOBER 1894]

### I

MR. FROUDE had been so long and so often assailed in the English Press that it is a pleasure to see the best papers lift themselves above the controversies and animosities which beset his life, and do him some justice. They could hardly refuse to recognise the fact that a great writer and a great ornament of English literature has gone. That would remain true even if his title to the name of great historian were disputed. I do not know that it is disputed except by the Dryasdusts, who filled the air with clamour against him while he lived.

Mr. Freeman was at the head of these. He, no doubt, was something more than a Dryasdust; a man of some force of mind, with a power of seeing some historical truths broadly. But Mr. Freeman was a drudge, and he could tolerate no one who was less a drudge than himself. He was, moreover, a man of unfortunate temper and unfortunate manners, and he wrote for a periodical which had at that time the least amiable temper and the least polite manners of all modern serials, the *Saturday Review*. In its genial columns Mr. Freeman poured out calumny on the writer whose conceptions of historical truth and of the right historical method differed from his own.

Mr. Froude's offences, if any, were critical and

literary. Mr. Freeman treated them as if they were offences of morals, violations of the Divine law, and as if he (Freeman) had been appointed by the Almighty to execute justice upon this miserable sinner. Such at least was Freeman's own notion of his duty and of his attitude. To the bystander it seemed as if more private motives actuated him, and as if nothing but personal hatred could explain the ferocity of these personal attacks. That Freeman did hate Mr. Froude is, I fear, but too true. His hatred, however, had probably no other source than history. I never heard that there was any purely personal resentment. Mr. Freeman's evident delight in the infliction of torture was the delight of the inquisitor, not due primarily to the enjoyment of human suffering but to the conviction that the wretch ought to be tortured, and that it is he on whom the duty of torturing him devolves. The rest is habit. When he had once grown used to this form of excitement he could not live without it, nor was his a nature peculiarly alive to the agonies of others.

It is the fashion to say that Mr. Froude did not belong to the modern historical school. Of this school Bishop Stubbs, Mr. Freeman, and other eminent persons of the last generation, were the founders. It was both critical and constructive, and proceeded upon sound notions of what history ought to be like, or how it ought to be written. But in so far as it was original the true origin of it is to be sought in the scientific spirit which, about that time, began to permeate the minds of men and to modify their views on the true method of dealing not with history merely but with all the problems of life and of literature. The historian went to the original documents for his account of a reign or of a revolution, just as the palæontologist

betook himself to the fossiliferous rocks for the record of the world's construction, or of the varying forms of life which during one or another period of millions of years had peopled it. The historians, however, applied their canon with a strictness which the physicist knows to be excessive and often misleading, and the pupils showed themselves more exacting and exclusive than the masters.

They had alleged Mr. Froude as an example of evil, and ever since the first two volumes of his *History of England* appeared, in 1856, they have denounced him and his history in terms which, if less violent than Mr. Freeman's diatribes, belong nevertheless to the controversial style of the seventeenth rather than of the nineteenth century. Mr. Froude's Henry Eighth was in their view a ridiculous caricature. It differed from the accepted estimate, and the evidence for the new Henry was wanting or, which comes to the same thing, was not sufficient to satisfy the critics. They fastened on certain errors of detail, and an error of detail was to their minds sufficient to prove the falseness of the whole picture. And there were State Papers which Mr. Froude had not read, and not to have read all the State Papers was of itself enough to condemn a writer who should presume to treat of the period covered by these Papers.

The gentlemen who framed this indictment were destined, some of them, to live long enough to see a curious thing. They were destined to see Mr. Froude's view of Henry prevail, and to accept it in great part themselves on the express ground that it had been sustained and confirmed by the very documents to which they had appealed. The documents were not accessible when Mr. Froude wrote. He had divined the real Henry without them, basing himself, as he expressly

declared, upon the statute-book as the true mirror of the time and of the great King. He said—I forget whether he said it in print, but I have heard him discuss the matter with the luminous eloquence which characterised his talk—he said that the popular notion of Henry made the people whom he ruled a nation of incapables and cowards. It is certain they were not. Their deeds are there to speak for them. They were a wise, valiant, patient people, heroic in act, far-sighted in their political views, deeply religious. It is inconceivable, said Mr. Froude, that such a people should allow themselves to be ruled for near fifty years by a sovereign who was a mere selfish debauchee and brigand. And he put aside that theory of Henry's character, and reconstructed the true Henry, so that he lived once more and had a new being, with the blood throbbing in his veins and his mind once more grasping the secrets of the statesmanship of his time.

There is probably no finer example of the right use of the historic imagination. There is certainly none which has put the pedants more completely to shame.

Did they ever make honourable amends to the great writer whom they had held up to contempt as a charlatan and an impostor? Not they. It remained with them an article of faith to revile Mr. Froude. They had reviled him honestly enough at first, when they honestly thought him wrong. Then he committed the inexpressible offence of being in the right; proved to be right by the very witnesses they had summoned to convict him; and they continued to revile him because he ought not to have been right; because he had not been right in the right way; because the genius of the man had done for him and for his subject what their laborious industry had failed to do for them.

Yet from the beginning Mr. Froude's *History* had been a popular book. The intelligent reader felt at once that this was true history; that in these pages and along the course of this glowing narrative there moved not the wax figures of Madame Tussaud's show but men and women. He breathed the air they breathed and lived the life they led. The sixteenth century became to him as conceivable and actual as the nineteenth. He might or might not agree with the point of view, or accept the historian's own theory of causes or of the connection of events. But he was aware that his eyes had been opened and that he was allowed to see for himself, to form his own opinions and, so to speak, to write his own history. The materials were provided for him. The curtain was drawn up. The scene lay before him and the scene was Henry's England and Elizabeth's England, and no less a drama than the Great Reformation was enacted before him. He felt, moreover, that though a costume might be wrong or a piece of furniture out of date the representation was as a whole truthful.

That it was picturesque no one ever disputed. I will not enter here into the question of Froude's style, on which it is hard to say too much. But there can be no doubt that for the purposes of history it has the supreme merit of transparency. Of course it fascinated people; often without their knowing it. They might not be quite sure why they read on and on, but they were quite sure they did not want to stop. They felt also that they were in the hands of a master. The secret of simplicity was his, and also of sincerity. And if there never was any such flourish of trumpets about Froude as about his contemporary Macaulay, he won his way silently to the hearts of his readers,

and if you once made friends with him, friends you remained.

It need not be denied that a catalogue of curious errors of detail might be compiled out of Mr. Froude's writings. I am not concerned to deny it. In fact, catalogues of that kind can be drawn up by anybody, and are drawn up now; though rather for the curiosity of them than because sensible persons now think them of importance. The newspapers reproduce some of them out of their inexhaustible pigeon-holes, and dwell once more for a moment on his carelessness about minute research or his superficial handling of important documents.

I will take two specimens. He wrote, says one critic, an account of an Australian sunset landscape and made the sun go down in the east. Did he? I do not remember, but if he did I should make the only answer I think worth making, namely, that from the coast of Yorkshire in England I have myself seen the sun set in the North German Ocean. The critic will probably think that impossible, but it is true, and there is a perfectly simple explanation of it; which I leave him to guess. One instance is as good as the other, and either is of equal consequence with the other, and neither is of the slightest.

The second is also illustrative of the critic's proneness to mistake the meaning of what he has heard. We are told rather solemnly that Mr. Froude did not study the archives at Simancas thoroughly,—which may depend on whether you think the archives more vital than the events they record; that when he was invited to Hatfield to inspect the Cecil papers he stayed but a day; and finally, that when he was writing the *Life of Lord Beaconsfield* the executors of the deceased states-



man offered him the opportunity of examining 'masses' of papers in their possession, and that he was satisfied with a glance at them during a Saturday to Monday visit. The probable truth of the other stories may be judged by what I know to be the truth of this last. The allusion is to the papers in possession of Lord Rothschild at Tring Park. These 'masses' of papers are contained in a single despatch-box. They consist entirely of letters which passed between him and the amiable but otherwise obscure lady who at her death left him a large sum of money. I read them all in manuscript. They have since been type-written, and lie on a table in the smoking-room at Tring Park. They relate to a single episode in Lord Beaconsfield's life, and anybody could master them in a few hours at most. To the political biographer their value is slight. Yet Mr. Froude is reproached because he disposed of them between Saturday and Monday. It is probable that his memory will survive that reproach.

## II

There are two facts in connection with Froude's retirement from the Church which have never been stated in print, nor ever, I think, been known to many of those who knew him best. I learned them from him, nor shall I soon forget the circumstances in which they were told. It was some three years ago. I had been rather ill, and as I grew better Froude came to see me. His coming was as balm, for he brought into the room the gentle influences of kindly friendship and of that rare sweetness of nature and charm which he possessed in a very high degree. He brought sunlight with him, sympathy and tenderness. He sat long and talked of

many subjects, and finally about himself and his earlier life. Presently he asked me if I had known Emerson intimately, and whether I could tell him much about Emerson the man. He listened to such reminiscences as I had of my visits to him in Concord many years before, and of Emerson's visits to London with his daughter. Then he said—

‘I do not ask you about Emerson's writings. They are known to me better than you think. It was Emerson more than any other one influence who convinced me that inside the Church of England there was no place for me. He broke the fetters. I owe my freedom to him.’

I asked whether he had ever told Emerson. ‘No,’ answered Froude, in his soft way, ‘why should he care?’ I protested, but he went on: ‘You know very well that Emerson never wished to make proselytes. His was no missionary spirit. I do not think the idea of converting anybody ever came to him. What he said and wrote he did, like Luther, because he could not otherwise. Nature spoke through him. He was her servant. And his freedom from all desire to influence others directly was one secret of his influence on others—at any rate on me. I had grown distrustful of preachers and zealots. The truth which most easily reached my mind was the truth which came like the dew from heaven. Of course I had thought much, and doubt had got possession of my soul before I turned to Emerson, but it left me doubting. Emerson taught me to decide; perhaps because he did not care to decide for me, or for anybody. But I felt, after reading him and after his spirit had, as it were, passed into mine, that the reign of dogmatic theology over me had come to an end. I must be free to think and feel for myself.

No bondage was any longer tolerable. And I saw that Emerson had just as firm a hold on morals as anybody had. Without that, he would have had little on me. For me as for him, the moral law of the universe is the one which remains binding. But what has ecclesiasticism to do with moral laws? It puts them all aside and puts its own creed and catechism in their place.'

Whoever has read Froude to any purpose knows well that, to the last, this faith in morals never forsook him. His books are full of it, as his life was. It was the dividing line between him and Newman. Each of these two remarkable men, each perhaps spiritually-minded in an equal degree, made his choice. To Newman the choice was between Rome and unbelief. He had begun by leaning on reason. He had a mind so subtle and a perception so clear that in him the free use of the reason led, as he practically admitted, straight to scepticism. From that he shrunk, but his sole refuge from scepticism lay in renouncing the reason and accepting the principle of authority. And no doubt he was logically and historically right in his conviction that of authority Rome had a monopoly, both historical and dogmatic. And never, I suppose, was a more signal example of the profound truth of the much questioned saying of Pascal that faith is an act of will; to which there is a corollary in Emerson's, 'The will, that is the man.' Newman resolved to believe what Rome told him to believe, and the act was just as clearly an act of will as when a man resolves to turn to the left rather than to the right. He closed his mind to all other influences, he suspended the very processes of thought by which he had so long guided his life; he determined to exert for the future the full force of his

intellect up to a fixed point and never again beyond that point.

Froude did the exact contrary. It may well enough be said that he cannot be fully understood without Newman, nor Newman without Froude. For both were in the very centre of the Oxford movement; Newman the elder and already a commanding figure—already, to use a more apt word, a fascinating figure—in the Counter-Reformation. Oxford, or so much of it as was concerned in this movement, lay already under Newman's spell. Froude's elder brother was one of Newman's lieutenants. Froude himself was at Oriel College, where Newman's influence was strongest. He was chosen by Newman to write one of his series of *Lives of the Saints*, and did actually write the life of St. Vivian. I always fancied that such a task might well have hurried Froude along the road he was afterwards to travel. For to write the life of a saint, and write it in the orthodox way, a man must forgo all satisfaction of that spirit of inquiry which leads to the discovery of truth. He must give up all notion of sifting stories or testing evidence. He must take the facts—heaven save the mark—as they are reported to him, as they come down to him in tradition, as they are fabricated for him by the dull and devout imagination of an ignorant monk or an ecclesiastical historian of any sort. And his duty is to make the dull narrative readable and the fantastic legend once more credible—credible to readers of the nineteenth century. Against such a task as that Froude's soul may well have revolted.

Whether it did or not, Froude soon saw that he was approaching the parting of the ways. He had to give himself body and soul to Newman or break with him utterly and with all for which he then stood. He did break the bond. It need not be thought

that in his case, or so glaringly as in Newman's, there was any act of will. For in Froude, with all his strong bent to purely religious belief and to the spiritual side of life, there was one thing stronger still, and that, as I said, was his loyalty to moral law. He could conceive of morals without religion, or at any rate without theology. For religion, or anything that called itself such, without morals, or of which morals did not form an integral part, he had a just abhorrence. The man who wrote the sentence about the will of God as evident in the whole history of the world—'a voice for ever sounding across the centuries the laws of right and wrong'—that man cannot have been other than deeply religious in the best sense of the word, and that man was Froude. The silver thread runs throughout all his writings. There is none of them in which he does not stand out as the ethical teacher. When he passed under the influence of Carlyle, it remained. Carlyle himself could not convert him to the 'might is right' doctrine, except in so far as he was allowed to use the word 'might' in the sense of moral force.

It was not certain that Carlyle himself did not so intend it. He did certainly use it with that meaning at times, and he has more than hinted that in his mouth the phrase was never atheistical nor ever immoral. 'How do they know they know what I meant?' asked the grim old sage. Froude was remote enough from Carlyle at the time of his revolt against Tactarianism, and near to Emerson, nor ought his relation to Emerson ever to be forgotten when his relation to Carlyle is discussed. The purity and fervour of Emerson would have kept him far from Tactarianism, and the fact that Froude renounced it while Emerson was his prophet is a new testimony to the inspiration of the thinker of Concord. There was in Tactarianism an element of

immorality, or of what Mr. Gladstone might call non-morality, which of itself would suffice to repel both Emerson and his English disciple.

With or without Emerson's help, Froude must ultimately have freed himself from Newman. What Emerson did for him was to hasten the dawn. Thereafter, he took pretty much his own way and did his own thinking. When he turned to history, the sixteenth century imposed itself upon him as a subject. The Reformation in England was to him, as he said, the greatest incident in English history, and he has treated it as what it is, a revolution in morals as well as a revolution against authority and the abuse of authority. It was to him 'the root and source of the expansive force which has spread the Anglo-Saxon race over the globe and imprinted the English character and genius on the constitutions of mankind.' Again you hear the ethical note. It is everywhere in the book. Catholics of course attacked the historian who came to glorify Protestantism. Some Protestants attacked the book on different grounds. But the public read and continued to read not only for the reasons I indicated yesterday, but because the conscience of this Protestant nation was touched. If Froude had remained in the grip of the Counter-Reformation, no such book would have been possible. But then, on the other hand, it was not possible for him to remain in the grip of the Counter-Reformation. The one authority which he recognised first and last and all the time was, I repeat, the moral law of the Universe, nor did his scepticism prevent him from calling it God's law.

The second fact to which I referred at the beginning may be told in a few words, but I apprehend that to those in the habit of testing character by acts it will

seem decisive on the question of Froude's sincerity. When he began to feel that he was drifting away from the Church, he told his father. His father was the Venerable Archdeacon Froude, not only a Churchman but a dignitary of the Church and something of a devotee. The father naturally sought to dissuade the son. Presently he added the weight of paternal authority to his entreaties. Finding this also ineffectual, he told young Froude plainly that if he renounced the Church he must renounce his expectations of fortune. The father was rich; wealth lay within the son's grasp, poverty was the price of resistance. Froude told the story very simply. He never said whether he hesitated. He only said, 'I gave up the fortune. I thought I could earn my own living, and I have.' Yet when he threw off the frock he resigned his fellowship and resigned the headmastership of a school which had just been offered and accepted, and began life over again as a man of letters. He had no income and no certainty of employment or of pay for his writings. Success was not indeed long in coming, but few will think that detracts from the homage due to the loyal courage with which he faced poverty for conscience' sake.

## III

Froude was something more than the most accomplished prose writer of his time. He was a man of the world, who lived a full and various life. There was no trace of the bookworm in him, nothing of that awkwardness which the mere student often betrays in the company of his fellow-men and of women. He had the manner of one who had always associated with the best people; a manner which seldom comes except from

associating with the best people, though it may perhaps be inherited, if acquired aptitudes can be inherited; a point on which the experts differ. He had also the qualities of decision and of active life which no living in libraries would ever have brought to him. He liked outdoors, loved nature, loved certain outdoor sports, and practised them. When he chose he could be a man of affairs, and had a practical business-like sagacity which did not fail him when the occasion arose. As he had to deal much with publishers, this was of use to him. I once asked him how he got on in such matters.

‘Oh, at first there were many difficulties, and a publisher, as you know, is not eager to give more than he must for a book. But now it is all plain sailing. Longmans and I understand each other very well. When a new book is to be brought out we both know just about how much it is worth, and as they know that I know, it is easy to come to terms.’

His sagacity stood him in equal stead in public affairs. When Lord Carnarvon sent him to South Africa, the energetic and ingenious politicians in that part of the world found him a match for the best of them. He understood high politics equally well, and the true meaning of that much abused or rather much misused word, statesmanship. Why should he not? He had to deal with statesmen in his books, and to pass judgment on their acts; to grasp great policies, to consider the causes as well as the course of events, to fathom motives, to calculate political forces. Whether this kind of ability be applied to the affairs of the nineteenth century or of the sixteenth matters little. The ability required is the same.

He showed a singular mastery of the Irish question, or of Irish questions, since the plural has always to



be applied to Ireland. Into the merits of his view, whether of past history or of present problems, I will not venture. There are quicksands on every side. I do not forget his visit to America or the animosities he aroused there among a portion of her naturalised citizens, and among some who had not taken the trouble to go through the formalities of naturalisation or to perform their full period of probation. Let us admit, for argument's sake, that he took the wrong view. He took it nevertheless with consummate ability. If he had not, and if he had not had behind him a great and just renown for dealing with such matters, the attack on him in America need never have been so bitter as it was, nor would Father Burke have invoked the thunders of the Church against him.

So of his book, *The English in Ireland*. There and in his American lectures alike he spoke as one having authority. Cromwell's is a hated name in Ireland, but it has not occurred to those who denounce him most savagely to belittle his genius. I never heard of anybody in these days—never since Carlyle's book on the great Protector—who did that except Mr. Gladstone. Froude's estimate of Irish history may bring down upon his head every censure except that of being deficient in largeness of view, and in the large handling of the issues with which he deals. Mr. Lecky, in the disproportionate Irish sections of his *History of England in the Eighteenth Century*, permits himself some very harsh criticisms on Froude. They are conceived in the Freeman vein, and sometimes almost in the Freeman manner. Mr. Lecky, that is to say, imputes motives. It is not enough for him that Froude is wrong in his facts, he insists that he was consciously and wilfully wrong. Censures of that sort upon such a writer as Froude

injure him who makes them ; not him to whom they are addressed.

It has, unhappily, been Froude's fate to be in the thick of controversies all his life long ; religious, political, personal, and many more. His own share in them has for the most part consisted in stating his own view once for all, and leaving his enemies without reply. That is the method of a man persuaded that he is right, and conscious, to say the least, of right motives. He answered Freeman once ; Lecky, I think, not at all. He had, nevertheless, a sensitive nature. Beyond doubt the calumnies heaped on him, and perhaps most of all in the Carlyle business, distressed him. But he was not the man to ask sympathy from the public, nor would he stoop to defend himself against charges which implied dishonesty, either personal or literary. He preferred to suffer in silence.

Nor did the injustice of his critics sour his nature. To the last he preserved his cheerful serenity and his faith in human nature. He had the faith in others which a man has who knows his own motives to be pure. With all that, he was capable of revenge, had he cared to take it.

He had a power of retort which his enemies may thank him—though they will not—for so seldom using at their expense. His published writings do not show the full extent of it, nor often show it at all. Nor did his talk, except with those whom he trusted. But when he chose he had wit, raillery, sarcasm, at the service of his censors ; a wit which cut to the bone, raillery which easily made others ridiculous, and a gift of sarcasm which shrivelled and blighted its victim. It was intellectual, not vindictive. He saw the weak points, and knew how to lay them bare. But it was

done with a placid good-humour, remote indeed from anything like malevolence. Almost never, I think, did Froude put forth this strength of sarcasm against an antagonist who sought to meet him in argument. He argued, but he would not wound. I never heard him say a thing meant to give pain. He respected the opinions, the sentiments, even the prejudices of all men with whom he conversed. He would let nonsense go unanswered rather than expose the folly of the speaker.

It was when he was in congenial company that he spoke out. If roused, as he often was, by what he thought insincerity in a public man, the lightnings flashed, and he had a power of summing up character in a condensed phrase which you remembered for ever after. He did not like Mr. Gladstone, especially in his later years. He did not like his monastic turn of mind, nor his long coquetry with the Anglican movement. He liked just as little the steadily growing bent of his later years toward opportunism, and his readiness to adopt any policy which promised him a majority. On these topics he discoursed one afternoon as we crossed the Park together, and as we parted at the Alexandra Gate he said, 'Mr. Gladstone combines the two most dangerous tendencies in modern English life. He is a Puseyite Radical.'

The charm of Froude's conversation, like that of his style, resists analysis, and I don't know that one need distinguish between them, nor between them and the whole man. For he was all of a piece. His style was, in one sense, natural to him, so was his talk, and he lived his life and went about the world and accomplished many great and beautiful things, all as if they were but the inevitable expression of a large and beautiful nature. The eyes told the story. They had

but one fault. They were too beautiful for a man ; as if nature in one of her innumerable caprices had defrauded some beautiful woman and given to Froude the eyes meant for her. It was said of him that he could fascinate anybody whom he chose. I doubt if he chose, or often chose. The spell he laid on those who came in contact with him sprang from no effort of will, any more than the perfume of a flower. The eyes had much to do with it, not all. The soul of the man looked out through the eyes as it spoke from his lips, the true man, simple, genuine, convinced, and in nothing without a touch of genius.

To resist analysis is one test of style. Gibbon, Macaulay, and many another writer famed for his way of writing, may be taken to pieces. By a little study, and with some chemical skill also, you may see how they got their effects, how their sentences were constructed, how the movement of their prose is ordered. There is something mechanical and something wilful in their art. Not so Froude. No process of chemistry and no anatomical research will arrive at the elements of his style or reveal his method. One reason is that he had so many methods. He had no tricks and no stereotyped phrases. He did not run in grooves. His style adapted itself to his subject, and was simple or splendid, familiar or heroic, colloquial or scholarly, as the case required. This felicitous variety explains in part the magic of his writing, but only in part. Age brought with it not less, but greater, flexibility. His *Erasmus*, the last work of his life, is equal to anything he ever wrote.

Necessarily, I suppose, much has been said since Froude's death of his conduct as Carlyle's biographer. Nothing new has been said, and the whole subject was

in fact long since thrashed out. A torrent of obloquy burst upon him when Carlyle's friends, and perhaps still more those who in life had never been his friends, perceived that Froude had resolved that the real man should be made known to the world. Treachery to his master was imputed to him. Froude was incapable of treachery, whether to Carlyle or another, and least of all to Carlyle. If he erred—I do not think he did—it was from a devotion to Carlyle and a belief in him which others did not fully share. Possibly he did not make allowance enough for the natural tendency of men to think the worst of each other and to mistrust motives. He himself had such an opinion of Carlyle as to think that his memory would be best served by telling the whole truth. It is not at all certain that he did not judge rightly. The immediate effect of the disclosures was to send Carlyle stock down in the market. What the ultimate effect will be is another matter.

Exactly the same thing happened when Boswell published his life of Johnson. The idolaters of Johnson were furious. They said Boswell had made him ridiculous and left a permanent blemish on his fame. Who says so now? Who does not admit that Boswell's book has made the old moralist and dusty lexicographer immortal? Who would blot a page of Boswell? It is easy to imagine a similar revulsion of feeling about Carlyle as he is seen in the pages of Froude's biography, in the Jane Welsh Carlyle letters, and the rest.

Froude has nothing of Boswell in him except Boswell's power of reproducing the features of his hero in the clearest light and making the man visible and conceivable. But he has wrought on the same lines in this sense, that each believed that the man he loved could bear the full light of day on his life and acts and

motives. Much of Carlyle's written work will perish, as much of Johnson's has perished. Each toiled for his own time chiefly; and a little for all time to come. But when the *Latter Day Pamphlets* and *Past and Present* and much else have ceased to be read, the figure of the stern old Scottish peasant will live in Froude's pages, in his own letters, in his wife's letters, and stand out as a figure which, whether you like him or not, you cannot forget and cannot resist. His very faults and defects have a fascination—those very faults and defects and rugged traits which Froude was most blamed for revealing.

I will end, though there is a great deal more to be said than can be said in a newspaper, with a story of Froude which I heard the day after his death from an admirable lady in whose house in the country we had met often—one of the two where he was most at home. She asked him to define cleverness. Froude thought an instant and answered: 'Perfect truthfulness.' I commend the answer to those who think he sometimes sacrificed truth to effect in his historical pictures. I am certain he never consciously did, and hardly less certain that he never did at all if the whole picture is looked at. For what Froude aimed at in history was first to form to himself a true impression of the times and the men he had to describe, and then to transfer that impression to the mind of his reader. It was the truth of the picture as a whole that he sought. He might make as many mistakes as Shakespeare did in his historical plays, yet the historical plays of Shakespeare and the historical writings of Froude will none the less remain among the most vivid and among the most truthful of all extant narratives.

## MR. WINTHROP

[LONDON, NOVEMBER 1894]

MR. WINTHROP's death can leave nobody untouched who remembers the Massachusetts of a generation ago, and what the name of Winthrop has meant to the Old Bay State for many generations before him, and above all at its very beginning. He was the last, I suppose, of the men whom we all thought of when the word Massachusetts was uttered, and there is none other which has meant more to her sons. Webster, Everett, Sumner, Andrew, Emerson, Phillips, Lowell, Holmes—these and many more were the idols of their time; not all with the same worshippers, but each with a group of admirers and followers. Winthrop, perhaps, never for his own sake was put quite so high, but for the sake of his family, his great ancestor who was the first and greatest of the Winthrops of the Puritan Commonwealth which is Puritan no more.

He was, nevertheless, always an amiable and interesting figure. He had the old traditions. He had scholarship, and dignity of character, and a social position which Boston, at any rate, did not undervalue. He had a capacity for public life, especially while public life was more simple, and perhaps more honourable, than it always is now. The leisurely movement of his mind was well suited to that period; ill suited to the one which has succeeded it. If he never had the force

and fluency and the Ciceronian elegance of Everett, he had a diction into which there entered nothing of vulgarity. He was sonorous and impressive and scholarly, and he lifted himself to the level of a high subject. The best models were known to him. There was often an elevation of style and sometimes an elevation of thought such as early and long familiarity with classic literature gives and nothing else gives in quite the same way. The merits of his orations were many, and they seem the more since there is now no orator who practises the same method.

Once it would have been permissible to speak of him as a gentleman ; permissible and descriptive. I do not know whether it is permissible now, nor whether the word would convey to everybody the meaning he himself attached to it. You could not imagine him doing an unworthy act. Distinguished as was his political position at one time, there never was a time when he could be called necessary to the State ; nor never a time when he was not ornamental. The State, any State, can ill spare the services of a man who had high ideals and a high sense of her dignity, and who was himself a kind of impersonation of his ideal. On an occasion of ceremony he spoke well. He understood the value of whatever is stately in public life, and of whatever is remote from the bustle and competition of politics. There was in his very appearance on a platform something that spoke to you of the past ; not his white hairs merely nor his venerable air, but his grave courtesy of manner and the remoteness from the common which his speech and thought alike denoted. I can hardly remember him when his hair was not white, so vivid are the impressions of later years. Yet I heard him when I was a boy at school and he in the prime of life.



There was always, I thought, a marked likeness between him and the late Mr. John Jay. Both held aloof in their later years from the strife that went on about them. Each had, as it were, inherited his conception of the State and of public duty, and each was a man of such purity and uprightness of mind that the ideas which prevailed a century ago with reference to public duty were natural to them, congenial, essential, indispensable. I think it a misfortune when such men disappear, and not less a misfortune because they have ceased to take an active part in affairs. Their influence was felt. Each of them had a habit of writing pamphlets on matters which interested them. That of itself was old-fashioned. A century ago the pamphlet was a recognised weapon which almost everybody used. As the newspaper grew the pamphlet waned, and what was left of its prestige passed to the platform. But Mr. Winthrop and Mr. Jay and a few others kept to the instrument they were familiar with. Often they published a speech and distributed it in pamphlet form. The most modern politicians have been known to do as much.

Yet the influence they exerted, of which I was speaking, did not depend on speeches or leaflets, and I should think neither of the two ever in his life was interviewed. The influence was personal; the influence which rectitude and a character known to be free from every stain always exerts. There are still in every community men who possess that kind of influence, and also those who accept it from others. If you saw Mr. Winthrop's name or Mr. Jay's name on a committee, you knew at once that the cause which that committee sought to promote was an honourable one.

The days when these men were Whigs were, of

course, long ago, and there are no more Whigs. I should think Mr. Winthrop might be the last of a once powerful party; the party which those who were brought up in its faith used ever to think of as the party of good citizens. How many Democratic Governors has Massachusetts had since Republicans succeeded to the Whig heritage? Before the transfer she had had one, and he was the offspring of an accident. Was General Benjamin F. Butler the first of the Democratic intruders? I forget, but I know he was one who in the old times would have been impossible.

An Irish Roman Catholic Mayor of Boston would have been equally impossible. We have since seen an Irish Roman Catholic elected twice or thrice in succession Chief Magistrate of that ancient city, and only beaten at last because the women of Boston, alarmed lest their schools should pass into the hands of the priests, turned out and canvassed the town, ward by ward and street by street, and chose an American Protestant to rule in his place.

All this marks the difference between the time when Webster and Everett and Choate and Winthrop were the guides and philosophers of the people of Boston and of Massachusetts. If Mr. Winthrop was not the greatest of these he was the last, and to me it is impossible to see him pass away without a word of regret, not for him only, but for what he represented. I was born a Whig. I sat at Webster's feet. Winthrop was a name which every one then held in honour, and I hope still does. If the young men of 1850 and 1854 parted company with the Whigs, they never lost their loyalty to the old leaders whom they could no longer follow.

I wonder whether those dates, 1850 and 1854, say

anything to the generation that is growing up? To us 1850 meant, and has ever since meant, the Fugitive Slave Law and the Seventh of March speech in the Senate, the apostasy of Webster and the abasement of his party—yes, and of the State which still followed him. Who now cares to remember that 1854 was the year which saw the Court House in chains, the Chief-Justice of the Supreme Court stooping to pass beneath them, and the surrender of Anthony Burns back to slavery? I do not know that Mr. Winthrop had any part for good or evil in those events. Perhaps he could not have had, any more than Webster. He, at any rate, did not come to the front for freedom as Richard H. Dana did. I name Dana because he belonged to the same party and the same class as Winthrop; a Whig, an aristocrat, a lawyer; he, too, with all the Whig traditions in his heart, and with the heart to put them all aside for the hunted slave whom few cared to champion. I saw as much of what happened at that time as most men, or boys. The whole history has never been written. I cannot write the whole, but when I think of the new persecution of the negro by a new South fired with the hateful spirit of the old, I imagine it might be a good occasion to revive some of the memories of the slavery and anti-slavery agitation which preceded the war by no great number of years. It has little or nothing to do with Mr. Winthrop, for Mr. Winthrop had little to do with it. I heartily wish he had had more.

He had, nevertheless, fought according to his lights, and in the good Whig way, a good anti-slavery fight. We who look back upon the Abolitionists as the true anti-slavery leaders, are apt to underrate the services of those who were not Abolitionists, or who became so at the eleventh hour only. Mr. Winthrop and his asso-

ciates led no forlorn hope, it is true, and it must also be said that, at a very critical moment of the contest, they retired in good order to the rear; obeying their commander like the disciplined soldiers they were. But they had been for years—the Abolitionists, whom no man regarded, alone excepted—the only force arrayed against the enemy. They were the enemies of slavery, Mr. Winthrop one of the foremost. His speeches, his votes, his whole public life, down to 1851, are there to prove it. Their faintheartedness at the end ought not to obliterate the gratitude which all America owed them, and owes them still, for a long struggle against heavy odds and against very potent influences.

We are bound to remember how long Webster and Everett and Winthrop held the merchants of Boston true to so much anti-slavery faith as was embodied in the Whig platform. State Street and Milk Street, finance and commerce, the cotton clerks of Boston, as Wendell Phillips on one memorable occasion contemptuously called them, would have bent the knee and hauled down the pine-tree flag long before they did, if these men, Winthrop included, had not shamed them into a show of loyalty to freedom. Capital and Commerce are always timid. They were timid then. They wanted peace with the South at almost any price. It will be the everlasting renown of the Whig party of Massachusetts, with Winthrop as one of its orators, that it stayed the movement for surrender—stayed it till Webster himself went plunging down the abyss at the bottom of which his best fame lies for ever buried.

Let Webster bear, as he must bear, the shame of that great treason to his own principles and his own past. Let the earlier Webster, nevertheless, be remembered. He is not the only public man whose life

divides in two, with a great chasm between his wise and generous manhood in its prime, and an old age clouded, whether by failing courage or failing judgment. Winthrop, of course, must bear what blame belongs to him. When that has been assigned to him in full, there will be still an amiable and beautiful memory. The long line of the Winthrops loses its last famous, or once famous, descendant. He may sleep in peace with his fathers. Among all of them, though there were greater careers, and perhaps more sturdy stuff, there was none kindlier, none more loyal than the loyal gentleman who has just left us, none whose private virtues were of finer temper.

He was known in London, but rather to the last generation than to this. Some of us remember his last visit here, and thought him delightful. Age had given him a manner even more softly elaborate than he had as I knew him in Boston. But wherever he was, and at whatever age, he moved among men as one who expected himself, and gave to others, a full measure of courtesy. He had a manly deference to men, a chivalrous demeanour to women, and with children he was fascinating. He was at home in the Speaker's chair at Washington, and at home in the Senate. Of course he ought to have been Governor of Massachusetts. That would have completed a long and always high-minded career.

## OLIVER WENDELL HOLMES

[LONDON, NOVEMBER 1894]

### I

DR. HOLMES has told the story of his *Hundred Days in Europe* with the genial simplicity and frankness which were characteristic of him. The book will remain an example of the freedom which may be used without offence in social chronicles, if there be good feeling and tact as well as freedom. Nobody on this side ever did take offence, although names were freely used and Dr. Holmes set down his opinions of places and sometimes of persons, and recorded without any foolish shame his social triumphs. Whether anybody took offence in America I never heard, nor whether the admirable old man was told that he 'loved a lord.' That discriminating remark is often made touching any American who is supposed to be on speaking terms with anybody unhappy enough to have inherited a title.

It would not have troubled Holmes, even had it been made about him. He was a man of the world who accepted the social conditions amid which he found himself, and never suspected it to be his duty to try to alter them, or to hold himself sourly aloof from the titled classes because they happened to be titled, or to declaim against them and their coronets and other distinctions. There never was a truer American, and yet there never was an American who, during a period

so brief, was on better terms with the aristocracy of England, or liked them better, and they him. He has put it all into his book. His pleasure bubbles up on every page. 'There are,' he says, 'twenty different Englands, every one of which it would be a delight to visit; and I should hardly know with which of them to begin.'

He has set down his impressions of several of the twenty, one just as openly as the other. It seems never to have occurred to him that there was any reason why he should conceal his intercourse with one set of people rather than another. He mentions all sorts of persons in the same tone and with the same ease, as if he were on a level with all; as he was, except when he was above them. Mr. Galton and Mr. Locker, Mr. Stopford Brooke and Morell Mackenzie, Lord Rothschild and Lady Rosebery, Mr. Gladstone and the Prince of Wales, Mr. Tyndall, Mrs. Phelps, the Princess Louise, the Austrian Ambassador, and hundreds more of every rank and position, form part of the procession which the good Doctor marshals before us. In private he observed, as every well-bred man does, the rules of social precedence. In print, the sentiment of human equality is the one which asserts itself.

When he goes to the Derby he finds himself 'in the midst of the great people, who were all very natural, and as much at their ease as the rest of the world. The Prince (of Wales) is of a lively temperament and a very cheerful aspect—a young girl would call him "jolly," as well as "nice."' And he has a compliment always ready for the Princess, 'the lovely, youthful-looking, gracious Alexandra,' and another for 'the always affable and amiable Princess Louise,' who probably had more real sympathy with the man of letters and of books than any of her brothers and sisters. He did not dis-

dain to make—though he does not say so in his book—a courtier-like speech to the Prince of Wales, who asked him whether he had ever seen the Derby before. ‘Sir,’ answered the youthful septuagenarian, ‘I saw the Derby just seven years before your Royal Highness was born.’ And he sums up by saying: ‘All these grand personages, not being on exhibition, but off-enjoying themselves, just as I was and as other people were, seemed very much like their fellow-mortals. It is really easier to feel at home with the highest people in the land than with the awkward commoner who was knighted yesterday. When “My Lord” and “Sir Paul” came into the club which Goldsmith tells us of, the hilarity of the evening was instantly checked. The entrance of a dignitary like the present Prince of Wales would not have spoiled the fun of the evening. If there is any one accomplishment specially belonging to princes, it is that of making the persons they meet feel at their ease.’

It was this feeling of ease and this sentiment of equality, subject only to certain conventional rules and usages, which made his welcome in England so general and so cordial. To say that he cringed to nobody and that he patronised nobody is almost to imply that he was capable of either, which most assuredly he was not. Equally incapable was he of the notion, wherein lies the essence of vulgarism, that a man or woman, because he or she belongs to ‘the classes,’ is less a man or woman, or less one of the great human family; of which even the classes are members. If he had ever used the word ‘snobbishness’ he would have used it of the critic who took or who implied that view. The only thing of which Holmes was intolerant was intolerance; and of that variety of intolerance which thinks



itself democratic not less than of others. He says: 'I hesitated at first about printing names in full; but when I remembered that we received nothing but the most overflowing hospitality and the most considerate kindness from all we met, I felt sure that I could not offend by telling my readers who the friends were that made England a second home to us.'

Not even though the friends bore some of the greatest names in England. It was not a part of England but all England which our American Puritan thought of as a second home. He had a belief, I am sure a just one, that his visit might draw England and America a little nearer together. He spoke of it as a source of happiness to him during his remaining days. He found in it also what he calls a higher source of satisfaction. 'If the kindness shown me strengthens the slenderest link that binds us in affection to that ancestral country which is, and I trust always will be to her descendants, "dear Mother England," that alone justifies my record of it, and to think it is so is more than reward enough.'

There also he has struck a true note—perhaps nobody knows how true who was not here at the time of his visit, and so able to see day by day the very remarkable effect he had upon the public opinion of those classes which were once supposed to be, and at one time really were, anti-American in feeling. A great change had occurred long before Holmes came. We had had Mr. Lowell as Minister. We had, at the time of Holmes's visit, Mr. Phelps and Mrs. Phelps. Some of the most brilliant of the Anglo-American marriages had been made, and the American girl had become known, and many of the best American men and women had become known in London. All these influences had been felt. Old animosities had melted

in all this sunlight, or many of them had. There remained, however, the memory of them, and I suppose an uneasy consciousness on the part of those who had cherished them that they were unworthy and out of date. And there was, of course, still a little of the resentment which he who has been in the wrong always feels toward him who has been the object of his unjust dislike.

Holmes came at the right moment, just when a breath of fresh air was enough to clear away what was left of these mists and fogs of prejudice. He had long had a great renown in England, where his readers were numbered by hundreds of thousands. He was, of all American writers, the one whose books brought him closest to the greatest number of readers; the one whose personal acquaintance they were most eager to make. Hardly anybody had put so much of himself into his books, or so agreeably.

He himself felt this strongly, and expresses it strongly. His book on Europe is addressed to his friends; to personal friends, and to those to whom he had become a friend through his writings. 'I have,' he says, 'daily assurances that I have a constituency of known and unknown personal friends whose indulgence I have no need of asking. I know there are readers enough who will be pleased to follow me in my brief excursion because I am myself, and will demand no better reason.' He italicises the words 'because I am myself,' the printers' rules in the Riverside Press of Messrs. Houghton being less strict than yours. And he adds: 'If I choose to write for them I do no injury to those for whom my personality is an object of indifference. For them there are other books.' There need be no better rule. An author may choose his own public.

He appeals to that public, and to that only. Sure of their sympathetic appreciation, he can afford to neglect, as the Autocrat did, the hostility or the indifference of those who read him only in search of something to censure.

On every page of the *Autocrat* the author stands out, and everywhere with a smile on his face and an outstretched hand. He was so sympathetic that the relation of author to reader became surprisingly intimate, and the wish to verify the impression was universal. It sometimes happens that there is a disappointment. In Holmes there was none. His readers found him more delightful than his books. Those who knew him only by hearsay used to declare that they must read what so charming a man had written, and some of them did. He was looked upon as a kind of social phenomenon; this youthful and cheerful activity in a man nearing the eighties. To a phenomenon of another kind, also nearing the eighties, London had long been used. But Mr. Gladstone impressed people by his commanding qualities and his tremendous energy, while Holmes enchanted them. It was the difference between the whirlwind and the vernal breeze, or between the torrent and the brook which sparkles and flows serenely on between smiling banks. Nor, in Holmes' case, were there any of those animosities to be overcome which have more or less embittered Mr. Gladstone's later days. An American? Yes, and because he was an American, I say once more, he had such a welcome in London as would have been given to no writer of another nationality.

## II

With such a fame as his and in such circumstances, it was of course inevitable that the dear old man

should be lionised. The process has its pleasures but is apt to be exhausting. At first, he seemed not to be aware that there were limits to his strength. He accepted everything, or everything was accepted for him ; including some invitations which he might just as well have refused, from people who had no claims on him and nothing to offer him. His good-nature was inexhaustible though his strength was not. He has recorded in his book some of the occasions on which his strength was unduly tried. He might have told much more had his good-nature permitted. There are always people who try to attach themselves to a celebrity. They think of themselves, not of him, and they make the most unreasonable demands. He suffered from these and the fatigue showed itself early. Nor did he always realise how readily in London he might refuse to submit himself to the burdens imposed on him. And when he was told of it he still preferred to think that the motives of his tormentors were good. He would not allow them to be called tormentors. His faith in human nature and his disbelief in the selfishness of others survived every trial simply because he was himself never selfish, and perhaps never thought of himself as a lion at all.

I used to call on him in the afternoons in the rather dingy rooms he occupied at No. 17 Dover Street, Piccadilly, on the ground floor. Not a ray of sun found its way into them. They were conveniently situated and tolerably clean and comfortable ; that was all that could be said for them. After a week or two, London and the lionising so told on him that his friends became anxious. To dine out and after dinner go to two or three parties was no light tax on a man of his age, used to the simpler pleasures and much earlier

hours of Boston and its much less complicated social arrangements. He felt the loss of sleep more than the fatigue, and used to have naps in the afternoon. The people in the hotel thought nothing of disturbing him or of bringing in cards and letters while he was slumbering. I asked him why he did not give orders not to be woke up. 'Oh,' answered the kindly doctor, 'nobody likes being turned away from the door, and you know people are so nice to me.' I have known him go off into a doze while he was talking, and in the middle of a sentence. He knew he was overworked, but finally he knew also that it was not altogether for his own sake, and he submitted with that amiable consideration for others which he never forgot.

What Holmes did not record and could not record in his book was the impression he made on this weary world of London ; a world ever grateful to any one who will provide it with a new sensation. The mere list of his engagements would show in what request he was and what the best people tried to do for him. He speaks of a concert at Lady Rothschild's. Probably he did not know quite how much his presence at that concert signified. He knew that it was a very brilliant occasion. He speaks of the Prince and Princess of Wales, of Patti's singing, of the royal table at supper, and other incidents which struck him. There had been a dinner to the Prince and Princess of Wales, and to the concert which followed about ninety people had been asked. Nine hundred others had, as sometimes happens in a society which exists in order to be seen at the right place at the right moment, asked to be asked. The only addition which Lady Rothschild made to her original list was that of Holmes and his daughter, who had lately arrived in London. The nine hundred who were on

their knees for invitations were left on their knees ; not one of them saw the inside of the marble palace at No. 148 Piccadilly on that evening. If Holmes had been told of the exception made in his favour it might have pleased him, and would have stirred his sympathies in behalf of those left out. It is the ambition of many a London hostess that her entertainments shall be 'small and smart.' If they are really smart, nothing is more difficult than to keep them really small. Lady Rothschild's position is such that she need give herself no concern about such a matter, but many people do concern themselves.

What Holmes saw on that rather memorable evening was one of the most brilliant companies ever collected ; remarkable for beauty, for rank, for distinction of many kinds, including that which attaches to the wearing of well-made gowns and of priceless jewels ; including also the distinction which was lent by the presence of some of the foremost men in the public life of England, eminent not by rank merely or mainly, but by abilities, character, great services, and the confidence of a jealous people. Amid that glittering company Holmes was the lion. That is to say, he was the stranger, the one unknown or little-known celebrity. He was the centre of many a group during the evening. The prettiest women in the room clustered about the little man, and some of them looked down on him by a head, one in particular, whom, since he names her, I will name, the Countess de Grey. Some of his countrywomen who for years before had lighted up London with their beauty and animation were there. Lady Randolph Churchill was one, and a girl, then I think in her first London season, Miss Langdon, now Mrs. Royal Phelps Carroll, the more remarked because she sat with a few other ladies

at the end of the drawing-room facing the audience. For the benefit of the virtuous Republican who thinks it impossible to mention the Prince of Wales without grovelling before him, I will quote what Holmes says—

‘How we two Americans came to be in so favoured a position I do not know; all I do know is that we were shown to our places and found them very agreeable ones. In the same row of seats was the Prince of Wales, two chairs off from A——’s seat. Directly in front of A—— was the Princess of Wales, in ruby velvet, with six rows of pearls encircling her throat and two more strings falling quite low.’

Well, it is evident that Holmes took pleasure in finding himself in this great house and in royal company, as he did when he went to the Derby with the Prince of Wales. He speaks of being among the grandest of the grandees. Why not? He was one himself, in a different way, and quite aware of it. But was he a worse Republican or a less loyal American, or less American? Does anybody think his head was turned? No one who saw him would have thought so. He had in the presence of his ‘grandees’ exactly the same manner and bearing he had in Boston. He knew his own value as well as the value of those among whom he now moved. It was fifty years since he had been in Europe. Many things had changed. He was the same. He had grown older in years and in wisdom; not otherwise. He had ripened and perhaps mellowed, but his was the same beautiful nature, unspoilt by prosperity and fame; incapable of being spoilt.

He used to say, half laughingly, that Lady Rosebery’s Foreign Office party half finished him. It was a tremendous crush. His progress up the great staircase was slow and difficult, and sometimes there came one of

those inexplicable movements of a great crowd which threatened to sweep him off his feet, and perhaps down-stairs. He faced this peril gallantly. It may not seem a great peril. But the surge of a throng is not always controllable, nor was Holmes used to such multitudes, nor had he the physique for them. He enjoyed all the same the brilliancy of the scene and the novelty of it. Probably nowhere in the world is there anything quite like a Foreign Office party, and this was one of the best that had ever been given. Again royalties abounded, and again there were scores of the loveliest and best-dressed women in London and people of distinction by the hundred. And again with perfect frankness Holmes confides to his public of friends how delighted he was with the party and the people. Far more delighted was he with his degree and his reception at Cambridge University, where the students clamoured for a speech which they did not get, and consoled themselves by singing 'Holmes, Sweet Holmes,' in those thunder tones of which only the collective undergraduate voice is capable.

As he says, Holmes hoped he might be doing his country some service by his London visit, and fostering kindly feelings by the kindness shown him. He did that service, and also another. He was accepted from the start as an Ambassador from America. It came to be considered in London that he impersonated his own country, and that the country which produced Holmes and sent him abroad had other titles to the respect of Europe than those dependent on the bigness of its territory or the rapid growth of its cities, and of its material prosperity; other even than intellectual titles. The respect became affectionate when it was centred upon him. He met the European demand for an



American who should be American, and not European. If it was not supposed—and it certainly was not—that there were sixty-five millions of Autocrats in the United States, it was felt to be much that there should be one. The judgment is a fair one which judges a country by the best it produces, or one of the best. The doctrine of averages is here of no application.

He was never ashamed to let it be seen that he was pleased, or even surprised, by the marvellous attractions of England, and he did not think it necessary to affirm that the State House at Boston, even with its gilded dome, was superior to St. Paul's. He preferred to claim for his own country what she was entitled to. He was content with her as she is, and thought it a poor compliment to her to pretend that she was something else. The patriotism which bases itself upon imaginary excellences was not his, nor did he think it patriotism. The realities were what he loved to talk to the English about; the solid facts; those parts of the social and political fabric in which America is essentially and permanently superior to Europe. His English friends saw how sincere he was and how genuine his Americanism was. They never dreamed of doubting him or of disputing with him when he discoursed, as he often did, on what he liked best in his own country. They accepted in the same spirit his frank tributes to the ease and splendour of social life here. His book is full of them, and they were not absent from his talk. No people have a surer instinct for sincerity than the English. There are few things they respect more, and few persons they like better than those who tell them the truth, varnished or unvarnished. And they certainly liked Holmes the better because he allowed them all to see that he was aware of his country's merits and

of his own. He had too much genuine modesty to have any that was false. He found his way through the intricacies of London etiquette—which are, indeed, less difficult to disentangle than those of New York—by his graceful intuitions and by quickness of perception. The habit of observation was his. And so he moved about in all sorts of social worlds, smiling and smiled upon, the spoiled darling of the best sets, had it been possible to spoil him ; and since it was not, winning affection and respect in equal measure.

## III

My memories of Holmes go back a great many years, and to times and places which have nothing to do with his visit to England. But as I may not find another opportunity, I will set down one or two of them here. They connect themselves almost at first with boating. I am old enough to remember the very beginning of that American enthusiasm for rowing which has since spread over the land, and still young enough to rejoice in it, and in having rowed in the first University race between Yale and Harvard, on Lake Winipiseogee—I hope I spell it right—in New Hampshire, in 1852 ; the first race and the first defeat of Yale ; long after to be so brilliantly redeemed. A little later, in the Law School at Harvard, and after that when at the bar in Boston, I spent many an hour in boats on Charles River, and there it was that I used to meet Holmes. He lived then in a house in Charles Street looking on the river, as did the larger house in Beacon Street to which he afterwards removed.

As his acquaintance with boats began late in life he never aspired to distinction in rowing, nor had anything to do with racing except to take a keen interest in it.

If he ever took interest in anything it was a keen interest. If he did not pull a racing oar himself he liked that others should. For himself he was content with his little outrigger—not quite what is now called an outrigger—in which he sculled himself up and down the river in a leisurely way. Without pretensions to science or to pace he rowed nevertheless very well and was very much at home in his cockleshell; as a man had need to be who wandered about on this stream, for it broadens as it nears the red brick houses, and the expanse of water between the Mill Dam and the Cambridge shore and bridges is enough to allow of a sea getting up in which an outrigger might easily upset; and sometimes did. I never heard that this catastrophe befell Holmes, but he risked it.

His boat was kept at Braman's Baths, which were also the headquarters of the Union Rowing Club of those days; the Club before which on one memorable day the red banner of Harvard went down, when a Union six beat the Harvard eight and, as one of the Union six, I thought my mishaps on Lake Winipiseogee avenged. Holmes looked on. As he was a Harvard man he took less pleasure in this event than we did, but he manfully congratulated us all the same. His sympathies were always broad enough for such occasions. He thought rivalries ought to be generous, and looked upon a defeat as only a preparation for a victory. In a sense, he was a pioneer in that great athletic movement in America of which the beginnings may be assigned to that period. As a man of science and of medicine he knew the need of it. And as a student of human nature he knew the moral value of outdoor sports and of physical training. It is so well understood now that the present generation may wonder

that, within a time so recent, it should have been thought of no consequence or ridiculed. But it was ridiculed and resisted. What is called the practical mind set itself against any form of exertion which was not productive. On a walk one summer's day from Troy to Schenectady, I overtook a farmer jogging comfortably on in his wagon at a foot's pace. He very good-naturedly asked me to get up for a ride. I thanked him, and said I was walking for exercise. 'What!' retorted this practical man, 'is there no hay to be mown?' His was at that time a typical view, and he was himself a type. Perhaps he was not wrong in thinking that there was work enough in the fields to keep all the spare muscle of all the young men employed.

But Holmes knew best. He knew very well that there was muscle which would not swing the scythe and would the oar, and he wanted to provide occupation for all of it. My farmer friend would have had you idle unless your work was useful; or what he thought useful. Everybody in Boston knew that the Harvard professor, the man of letters, the social ornament of the city, the friend of Lowell, of Emerson, of Phillips, of everybody who was eminent, could be seen daily in his boat toiling with the oars. Everybody heard him extol the exercise. He taught by example and by precept, and by both gave an impetus to a young movement which then was in need of all the help it could get. Not only rowing, but baseball, football, and every other manly game now practised in America owes a debt to Wendell Holmes.

In his own house the Autocrat was at his best. He loved it; loved I think best of all his library and the view from the library windows over the Charles, and

the sunshine that streamed in with the fresh breezes. The large, comfortable, airy, well-lighted room, with books all round the walls, was a good frame for the slight, alert figure and for the face on which time had left a hundred wrinkles but no mark of failing strength or diminished cheerfulness. The face sparkled in the sunlight. The eyes rested lovingly on the books, and beyond them wandered to the river as if after all his ample house could not contain the restless spirit. His joyous manner filled the room as the sunshine did.

The books were those of a man who cared more for reading than for books; unlike the collector who sometimes seems to care more for books than for reading—not always but sometimes. He had few rarities, few treasures, or what the book-lover would have reckoned such, and from the dandyism of fine bindings his collection was entirely free. Yet I remember how delighted the dear Doctor was when I came upon a book in old French red morocco, and told him I thought it might be by Derome. Whether he had ever heard of Derome I doubt, but I suppose I pronounced the name as one does that of a great man, and he caught at it. ‘Was he a great binder?’ ‘Yes, one of the best.’ ‘And you really think he bound this book?’—with an emphasis on the demonstrative pronoun, and a glance of scrutinising interest at the newly discovered treasure. It was quite safe to say yes. For there were a dozen Deromes; a whole family or clan of binders in the eighteenth century, and it has long been the custom of the enterprising—sometimes too enterprising—second-hand bookseller to attribute to Derome any specimen of old morocco which he thinks fairly good. Nor does he deem it necessary to warn his client that the Deromes were a numerous folk, nor to say which of them, if any,

was the real author of the binding he commends to the confiding buyer.

He showed me more than once, as he has shown many others, the desk at which he sat, the drawers neatly divided into convenient compartments for different kinds of paper and envelopes; and the gold pen with which he wrote. Like Goethe, he dwelt on the importance of stationery, and of a good pen, and good ink to the writer, especially the imaginative writer. Between him and the due expression of his thought in black and white, there ought to be as few obstacles as possible; no friction that can be avoided. Many a fine thought, he declared, had perished ere it was fairly born, strangled in the birth by a hair on the nib of the pen, or choked out of life by muddy ink. His paper was ruled and glazed; his ink a thin black; not blue-black as is much of the best writing fluid in this country. He had written I know not how many books with the same pen. And he looked at the pen as if it were part of himself.

Long before this, in the old days of the Charles Street house, there were associations which seem even more remote than those of the river and his boat. Paul Morphy had come to Boston and set us all aflame about chess. We already had a flourishing chess club of which Dr. Richardson was president, meeting in a large upper room on Washington Street. We resolved to give Morphy a dinner. Never I should think since chess was invented had quite so much homage been offered to any of its champions as was then bestowed on the young genius from New Orleans, nor ever so many celebrities assembled in his honour. Holmes was asked to preside, and assented joyfully. When he did a thing, he did it from his heart. There came to the

dinner the president of Harvard University, the Chief Justice of the State, Professor Agassiz, and a score of others hardly less famous and dignified. The scene of it was the Revere House, and the incident has passed permanently into history because it seemed necessary to Wendell Phillips, then as ever an enthusiast in the cause of extreme temperance, to address a public rebuke to all these grave and reverend signiors. Their offence was not in paying a compliment to Morphy but in dining at the Revere House and allowing wine to be put on the table. The philippic did not deeply disturb Holmes. 'Wendell,' he said, 'holds a brief for the fanatics.' The two men each spoke of the other as 'Wendell.' They were cousins more or less near, and liked each other—it was more than liking, an affection on each side.

At the dinner Holmes acquitted himself perfectly, spite of his protest, at first rather pathetic, that presiding over dinners was no part of his function in life. He did it as if to the manner born; gracefully, with sufficient authority, and with an unfailing flow of buoyant humour. His preparation for it had been to me even more interesting. It was then for the first time that I came to see much of him, for I was in charge of the arrangements by virtue of being secretary of the club, and many were the conversations we had together. He was fascinating, and I remember thinking I had never met anybody so young—that is to say, with so much freshness of mind and freshness of interest, mellowed by literature and converse with life, and all upon a basis of sound, scientific learning. He had the art of attaching the young to him: art it was not, but a natural gift; spontaneous, not consciously exercised. It was another sort of experience to see him at the

Saturday Club, as I did several times ; he as one of the patriarchs of that celebrated company, I as a stranger and a guest. There he met his equals, and there was always, consciously or unconsciously, a rivalry between them and as it were a contest for victory. They were all victorious, and Holmes enjoyed the victories of others quite as much as his own.

The years that he lived were as so many friends to him. They had brought him almost everything a man could wish, and he took pleasure in the mere number of them. He took pleasure in recalling also his early anticipations of long life. They had become a fulfilled prophecy. In the copy of *Over the Teacups* which he sent me, he has appended to his friendly inscription on the fly-leaf, with the dates, a copy in his own handwriting of these well-known verses—

‘And if I should live to be  
The last leaf upon the tree  
In the spring,  
Let them smile as I do now  
At the old forsaken bough  
Where I cling.’

1831.

1890.

‘It is something,’ he says, ‘to have climbed the white summit, the Mont Blanc of fourscore.’ And he prefaces the story of his journey to Europe with the remark that ‘Mr. Gladstone, a strong man for his years, is reported as saying that he is too old to travel, at least to cross the ocean, and he is younger than I am—just four months to a day younger.’ The pride of the older man in his fresh vigour is evident, a just pride with something beautiful in it. Mr. Gladstone, I hear, was moved by the death of his senior ; partly from a liking for the man, partly as if a warning had reached



him. But neither in the life or death of Oliver Wendell Holmes was there a warning, but an encouragement, a charm that filled his own sphere and many another; and to everybody who loves beauty of nature and beautiful gifts, an inspiration.

## MR. JOHN WALTER

[LONDON, NOVEMBER 1894]

### I

OF the two losses which within the last week have befallen two great dynasties, the death of the late head of the Walter family concerns England more nearly than that of the Emperor of Russia. For there is probably no single influence so potent in English public life as *The Times*, and the death of the man who for near fifty years has been the autocrat of that very autocratic journal, is a matter of national concern in a very large sense. Mr. John Walter shared his responsibilities with others, as every great despotic ruler does. The Czar himself had his administration and bureaucracy, and they were often stronger than he was. Mr. Walter had Mr. Delane, and the two men measured swords more than once. Mr. Delane's hand was more constantly on the helm, but when the course of the ship had to be determined Mr. Walter's was the deciding voice. In the last resort he was *The Times*, and it must therefore be said of him that he has been on the whole for more than forty years the most powerful individual in England. Prime Ministers come and go. The great journal of which Mr. Walter was the head remained. I do not see how it can be seriously questioned that the sum of all the influences he wielded day by day and year

by year was greater than the sum of the influence of any other Englishman who has lived during that period.

Of course he was a journalist—a mere journalist. He belonged to a profession which it is the fashion to despise, and the profession, it must be said, in too many instances lends itself to this temper on the part of the public, and does its best to justify that attitude of contemptuous dislike which the public assumes or affects. I speak of English journalism and of the English public. Mr. Walter, however, belonged to that branch of the profession which wins respect by making money. If he was a mere journalist he was not a mere writer or a mere editor. He was a proprietor. Journalism was to him, among other things, an enterprise of commerce. He inherited a fortune and his position on *The Times*. He was a hereditary journalist, as other men in this country are hereditary legislators. He strengthened his position and increased his fortune by business sagacity. If he had not been a strong man he could have done neither.

But it is also to be said of him that he did not use the superiorities of his position to the detriment of the inferior persons who helped to make his paper. He was just and considerate. A writer, or whatever he might be, who served the paper faithfully was held to have a claim on it by mere length of service. There is not a case on record where an old servant of *The Times* has been turned into the street, or dismissed with either abruptness or violence, still less with ignominy. If it became necessary to dismiss, it was the rule of the office that the dismissal should be considerate, and a pension was awarded as of right.

The men on the paper have always felt their position secure, and this is true of compositors and printers

and employees of all kinds, as well as of those concerned in intellectual or editorial work. Mr. Walter might seem to the outsider hard or austere. Everybody in his employment knew that he was just and more than just. His liberalities and generousities were constant. I have known something of the history of the office for some years past—perhaps more than most outsiders—and I know how Mr. Walter showered benefits on those about him, and I think no man under him ever had to complain of an injustice. He was the arbiter of every man's fate, and every man knew that his fate was in safe and honourable hands.

There is much to say about Mr. Walter personally, but it is impossible to separate him from the journal with which he was identified and which was identified with him. He must be judged very largely by what he did as journalist. When his father died the aims which had governed him were described in *The Times*, as follows :

‘To recognise commerce and industry as the true source of the greatness of England ; to uphold the cause of humanity and freedom ; to spare no efforts in the collection of intelligence and no pains in securing its accuracy and authenticity ; to discuss public affairs with moderation, good sense, and a single-minded regard for the welfare of the country, the stability of its institutions and the maintenance of its position among the great Powers of the world—in a word, to look at all public affairs, and all matters which concern or interest the public, with the eyes of an English citizen of virtue, good sense, and intelligence, and to express judgments upon them in a style not unworthy of our noble English tongue ; these were the principles which Mr. John Walter, the founder of *The Times*, impressed upon his journal, and these are the principles which have made *The Times* what it is.’

I do not think that too strongly stated. It is, with the exception of the first phrase, an adequate statement of a high ideal. If anybody cares to judge for himself how high it is, let him consider how many journals there are to which it would apply, or of which it could be truly affirmed that they do in the main live up to that ideal, and act on those high principles. It is true also to say that they were inherited by the third Mr. John Walter who has just died, and that, while he abated nothing of their substance, he strove steadily to improve the form in which they were embodied. The measure of his success in that effort is the measure of his success in life. There are, of course, qualifications to be made, and many a just criticism upon the conduct of this great paper must be taken into account. It none the less remains true that Mr. Walter's life was a success, and that of few men in great place is it to be said that they more nearly attained to the ideal they set before them.

So far as honesty of purpose is concerned there is a simple test. I do not think it can be alleged of Mr. Walter that he ever did a public act except from a public motive. That covers his connection with the journal he controlled; and often as he and his paper have been wrong, grievous as is the injury they have at times done to America, appalling as were some of their mistakes, I believe it to be true of both the man and the journal that their motives were high public motives and never personal or selfish or passionate.

But motive is not everything. It is not even much unless it lead to wise and prudent conduct, and the test must therefore be broadened. Was the conduct of the paper as a whole and on the whole wise and prudent under Mr. Walter? Perhaps the best answer is that if

it had been on the whole otherwise, *The Times* would long since have ceased to be what it beyond question has long been and still is, the leading journal of the world. A career of folly and recklessness would have been a short career.

There is a better answer still, in the result and effect of the greatest mistake it ever made in domestic matters. I mean the so-called Parnell letters. There is no reference to that gigantic blunder in the four columns which the paper to-day devotes to the memory of its late chief. The subject is discreetly avoided—discreetly, if it be best to pass over in silence an error for which there is nothing to be said. It is a sore subject in the office. I certainly do not refer to it in order to fasten a reproach upon Mr. Walter, who, with the late Mr. Macdonald, the manager, was understood to be chiefly responsible for the purchase and use of the forged letters. The most violent partisans on the other side, whatever they may have said, never really supposed that Mr. Walter or Mr. Macdonald, or anybody else on the paper, knew or dreamed that the letters were forged. They bought them heedlessly and credulously, and without any such inquiry into their history as they might have been expected to make. That is a sufficiently grave reflection upon their sagacity, and no doubt people said when the facts came out: ‘What will they do next? If they could do that, they might do anything, and what will become of the paper in such hands?’ And they predicted—many good judges predicted—that the authority and prestige of *The Times*, especially abroad, would never recover from the blow.

In point of fact, its authority and prestige never suffered appreciably. Why? Because there was behind

this one melancholy incident a long history of wise and prudent conduct; of good sense, of moderation, of almost unbroken success. The mistake Mr. Walter made in the Parnell letters threw into relief the high qualities of his previous management and of his character. Europe saw that this one great error was the exception. It did not shake men's faith in the general prudence of the editing. Could there be a more striking testimony to the ability and intelligence with which it had been conducted?

Nor do I think we need try to adjust the proportions in which credit for this general ability and intelligence is due on the one hand to Mr. Walter, and on the other to those associated with him in editing and managing the paper. It is the case of the general commanding-in-chief who is well served by subordinate generals and his staff. The public bestows its applause mainly upon the general, and justly. Admit all that is claimed for the staff and the subordinate generals. It was the general-in-chief who chose them all, and to know how to choose good men is one of the arts of generalship, whether in the field or the newspaper office. Mr. Delane was a man of genius, if the word genius may be used in connection with journalism. He was the ablest editor in Europe—incomparably the ablest. Mr. Walter, the father of him whom we are all regretting, chose him and appointed him, and the late Mr. Walter maintained him in his place, and maintained him in spite of some collisions, and of the masterful temper which Mr. Delane showed alike to his one superior and to his subordinates. Both of them knew well that a great newspaper office must be a great dictatorship, or, if you like, despotism. There must be one rule.

In the ordinary editorial routine of the office it was

Mr. Delane's rule. He was supposed to express the will of Mr. Walter. If the two minds differed, and Mr. Delane could not convince Mr. Walter, it was Mr. Walter's will which prevailed. There is in the well-organised journal, or great journal, no more room for caucuses and town meetings than there is on the deck of a ship. Nor does the existence of what in some offices is called a council militate against the efficiency of this principle. A council is, at the best, advisory. It can no more control the conductor of the paper than the Cabinet Council at Washington can control the President. The President can turn them all out, and weak indeed must be the Chief Executive which suffers itself to be controlled by advisers whom it may at any moment remit to private life.

Mr. Delane was however editor, and Mr. Walter had too clear a perception of circumstances to interfere unnecessarily. Mr. Delane was one dictator and Mr. Walter another. Mr. Delane's control was daily and hourly. Mr. Walter was more or less in the background, but his intervention, when it was called for, was decisive. He was the real Jupiter. It is enough to say that without Mr. Delane or without Mr. Walter the paper would have become something unlike what it grew to be under their two hands. The public did not hear very much about either. Neither was a man who cared to advertise himself, or to use his great position for any other than the most strictly legitimate purposes. The governing men of the kingdom knew both and knew that both belonged to the governing class.

## II

It was Mr. Walter's conservatism which made *The Times* so slow to come into line with modern ideas and



modern improvements in journalism. When I speak of improvements in journalism, I certainly do not mean what is called by some professors of it the New Journalism. I mean, first of all, improvements in the methods of collecting news. He was not quick to adopt those, and he was not quick to detect the new currents in journalism which were to make so great a change in the conditions of journalistic life.

It is forty-seven years since, upon the death of his father, he assumed control of *The Times*. At that date, and for long afterward, the paper was supreme in a sense in which it is no longer, and never will be again. It was prior to the development of the penny press. The growth of that amazing phenomenon in England was not rapid, its origin not sudden; there was no surprise. Before its day the leading journal was something more than a leader; it had hardly a competitor. It certainly had none in the provinces. There came, moreover, a period of great good-fortune to Mr. Walter and his paper, the Crimean War. Mr. W. H. Russell's correspondence from the Crimea brought the paper a great accession of fame and influence. At the end of that war it had distanced everybody, perhaps more completely than ever before. Its position was its own to maintain or to lose. Its authority in commerce and finance was greater than ever, and much greater than it is now. A merchant at Manchester or Liverpool never dreamed of making an important bargain till he had had the market news of *The Times*. If he did not actually wait for the paper, he waited for a despatch from London with a summary of its news. The local press gave him little, and that little he did not trust. All over England it was the same. The news of politics, of diplomacy, of finance, of all the great transactions of

the world, was given fully and well in *The Times*, and it was hardly given in any other journal.

But the pace increased. The conductors of the provincial press, and in Manchester soonest of all, began to perceive how irksome it was to depend on London. London itself began to struggle in its bonds and to consider whether a monopoly of news and influence was any better than any other monopoly. The stir in both places occurred at the same time. Neither the penny papers of London nor the provincial papers grew to their present stature overnight. But there was a new birth, and the growth was to follow.

Mr. Walter had, I think, ample opportunity to protect himself against competition. He had energy, but he had not in any marked degree alertness of mind. He allowed himself not to be passed but to be approached in the race. He would not admit that there was a race. He disdained the idea of competition. The position to which his paper had attained had become, in his mind, a part of the order of the universe. It was astronomical, and revolved in obedience to fixed laws. Once he was asked whether he was aware how much *The Daily Telegraph* was gaining in circulation and popularity. 'Sir,' was Mr. Walter's answer, 'I do not know of the existence of *The Daily Telegraph*.' It was magnificent, but it was not journalism.

He might have said a very different thing. He might well at that time have said to himself, 'I will allow no paper but *The Times* to print the news.' He could almost have made that good, if not quite. In prestige, in resources, in wealth, in opportunities, in the goodwill and in the interest of those who had news to give, he stood alone. To this day a correspondent of *The Times* has an advantage. It is worth far more to a

statesman or a financier that the intelligence of which he wishes the public to be in possession should appear in the leading journal than in all others put together.

This is true all over the Continent. I have seen something of it in the great capitals; especially in Berlin and in Paris. The renowned representative of *The Times* in Paris, M. de Blowitz, ranks with an Ambassador—he *is* an Ambassador, and there are few diplomatists so able as he in the business of diplomacy, and in the multifarious affairs with which an Ambassador has to concern himself. His supremacy is due partly to his extraordinary abilities and experience, partly to the prestige of the journal he serves. He has done immense service to that journal, and he at least is modern and does not shrink from the methods of the New Journalism. In Berlin the whole arrangements for the non-German press of the whole world were left in the hands of *The Times* representative. In neither capital could either man have been and done what he was and what he did except for *The Times*.

Judge then, by what survives, of what has gone and what Mr. Walter allowed to slip through his fingers. If he had started the early newspaper-train to the provinces in time, he would have retarded, if he had not paralysed, the growth of the provincial press. *The Manchester Guardian*, as it is to-day, might never have come into being,—and it is the ablest penny paper in England, not excepting any one of those in London. The one nearest to it is *The Standard*. I am not saying that it would have been for the interest of the public, and especially of the provinces, that this and the half-dozen other leading provincial journals should have been stifled or overshadowed. It is the interest of *The Times* only that I am considering. So of the

London penny papers. It might be a public misfortune were they less powerful than they are. They remain one and all inferior to *The Times*, but they have been allowed to improve opportunities which their great predecessor neglected, and to present themselves as competitors where competition there was aforesaid none.

Probably the very completeness of the triumph in the Crimea brought disaster to *The Times* in the Franco-German war of 1870. Mr. Russell's success had been won not so much by rapidity in transmitting news as by his masterly handling of the questions growing out of the maladministration of the British army in the Crimea, and at the War Office and Horse Guards in London. Mr. Russell and his chiefs between them reformed, not to say revolutionised, the Quartermaster's department and other departments also. Nor was there any narrative of military movements and of battles comparable to Mr. Russell's. In 1870 all was changed. No British army was in the field. The struggle was Continental; on a scale and at a pace before unknown. The English public watched it breathless. What they wanted was news, early, full, trustworthy. They got, in the course of events, pretty full and trustworthy news in Mr. Walter's journal, but almost never early news. He was outstripped from the start and he never caught up. I have told elsewhere the story of the alliance between *The Daily News* and *The Tribune*, and how it was that this alliance put *The Daily News* for a time, and so far as war news was concerned, at the head of the English press. *The Times* was beaten and all other English papers were beaten by American enterprise. It was America which showed them the way, and an American journal which first in Europe used the

telegraph on a great scale, and for the transmission not of brief despatches merely but of war correspondence in bulk. *The Times* was driven to copy from *The Daily News* the very despatches which *The Tribune* supplied. The primacy of the leading journal in the collection of war news was challenged and overthrown.

For these failures Mr. Walter must be held responsible, as must the final authority in all cases where organisation fails to defeat a rival organisation. Yet Mr. Walter had this excuse and this justification. He continued to supply as good intelligence as the majority of the public, or of his public, cared for. The appetite for early news had to be created as well as supplied, nor is there to this day in England that feverish thirst for mere novelty which prevails in America and has had so singular an influence upon American journalism. The leading journal, after its defeat in 1870, remained the leading journal, just as it did years later, after its Parnell catastrophe. Its editors are perfectly right in saying that it is still the leading journal. Mr. Walter's contributions to its prosperity and to the continuousness of its authority were of the very highest importance.

It is not to be supposed that he neglected its material improvement. He built the spacious offices which it now occupies. He adopted the press which is called after him ; a much better press than those which preceded it ; and so well satisfied with it was he that he clung to it long after other presses had surpassed it. He perfected the organisation of the office. Morally and intellectually he kept the standard high. The one point in which he allowed his prejudices, or I will say his personal predilections, to outweigh public considerations was with reference to the Church of England. He

was pre-eminently a Churchman—as pre-eminently as Mr. Gladstone himself. He put the Church before all; perhaps before religion itself. You saw it in the voluminousness of the reports of Church Congresses and of Convocations, and in the editorial treatment of questions touching the Establishment. You saw it also in his unsympathetic demeanour to Nonconformists, and still more to the Jews. If I had time there were much to be said on the Jewish side of journalism and of great affairs, and on the detriment which Mr. Walter's attitude to the Hebrew race caused to his paper. But I pass from that.

I must pass also with but a word over Mr. Walter's life outside journalism. Except on the personal side it is not very important. He was long in Parliament, and was a good member of Parliament. But his influence as a legislator could not be dissociated from his influence as a journalist, except by refusing, as he steadfastly did, to allow the conductor of *The Times* to be identified with the representative in the House of Commons. He was in other respects a fine example of what it is still thought permissible in this country to describe as an English gentleman. He was simple, upright, unbending in matters of principle and of duty; a good landlord, a good neighbour, a good member of the great community in which he was so great a personage.

Men thought him cold. He was not cold, but he was extremely reserved, except among those with whom he was intimate. That is not a point on which I can speak personally. My acquaintance with him was never intimate. But I know those who knew him intimately. I was staying not long since in a house where he had often been a guest, and where he felt at home. He was, in such circumstances, delightful. He did unbend. He

delighted in children and in dogs. He had a playfulness of nature, repressed but genuine and charming; and a heart of gold for his friends. He had learning and refinement and a love of art; while for nature he had an affection which expressed itself in his park and gardens; and both art and nature together in the splendours of the place he created. There, at Bearwood, he died, and he leaves few men behind him who had a loftier conception of duty, or a character moulded of elements more solid or more indissolubly essential to the substance of a manly nature.

## III

‘His one most striking characteristic,’ writes a friend who knew Mr. John Walter intimately, ‘was his absolute rectitude. It was no rule of life with him, but something that was as ingrained in his nature as the necessity of breathing.’

When you consider that this was true of a man who all his life long had the absolute control of a great paper, it becomes still more striking. He was, of course, beset by the usual temptations of journalism. The possession of absolute power, whether in journalism or otherwise, begets in most men the temptation to use it. It is one thing to use it for its own sake or for the pleasure of using it; another to use it for the gratification of ambitious desires, or in any selfish way. That was not Mr. Walter’s way.

‘I do not think,’ continues his friend, ‘that he ever asked himself what is right and what is wrong, any more than we ask ourselves which foot we shall put forward first when we start for a walk.’ That is an estimate of character which would have delighted Emer-

son. It was ever Emerson's view that beauty of nature is a more admirable thing than that virtue which comes from effort. It is better for a man to be himself than to conquer himself; provided that the love of virtue, or of truth, or of the spiritual life, or of charity towards others, be natural to him. Effort implies a struggle with the natural man, and is necessary only when he goes naturally wrong and not right.

'Some people,' he goes on, 'show a contempt for meanness. He never did, for he seemed never to see it. That a man should act from a low motive seemed never to occur to him, and when he came across such a man he called him a "victim of immeasurable folly," or described him as insane.' The eulogy is so sweeping that again one has to remember that it is bestowed on a man who had to face the facts of daily life all his life long; whose intercourse with others was constant and active; and who was concerned with the practical realities of a profession which more than any other perhaps is thought to foster cynical views of men and things. He must have been brought often in contact with people who wanted to use him and his paper. He had to repel such attempts. So frequent are they on every great journal, and I suppose on *The Times* most of all, that he who is exposed to them may be excused if such experiences lower his estimate of human nature. If, on the other hand, they do not lower it, how high must be his ideal and how firm his faith!

The fortunes of the Walter family were, of course, bound up with *The Times*, yet his attitude to the paper was never that of a man who regarded it merely as a source of income. He never even thought of it as a money-making machine, primarily. His main interest in the paper was of a different kind. In the world of



business, and especially in America, where business fills a larger part of life than anywhere else in the world, such statements may provoke scepticism. I have nothing to say to the sceptics. They must take their own views. All I can say is that I know what I am telling you to be true. It was said of him in the office that he was never known to make an inquiry as to financial results. His dividends were paid into his bankers. He knew, of course, what they were, and whether they were above or below the average. But he was never known to express the least satisfaction over a good year, or the least disappointment when the yield was less than usual. If he showed an interest in details, it would be as a recognition of the energy of those about him, though, as you will see presently, it was not his way to praise freely, or hardly to praise at all. He might see signs of prosperity—for instance, a great number of columns of advertising or a whole page advertisement. If he commented on it, he did it out of kindness. The price he never asked. Everybody who knows anything of London journalism knows that of recent years there have been very sweeping changes and reforms in the administration of the paper. At the end of the first year of this new administration, an elaborate comparative table was drawn up, showing large economies and other agreeable results which he might have been expected to study closely. He glanced at it, said, 'Yes, very creditable,' handed it back, and began talking of something else.

The staff might be supposed to think they got scant recognition, but they knew the contrary. If they missed the direct commendation which men who have done their best sometimes like and occasionally get, they were perfectly aware what he thought. The men

who earned his confidence knew they had earned it. To him praise was unnecessary. He was ready to believe that every man did his best. He gave others credit for the motives which actuated himself. He expected no praise; he hardly felt that others might expect it or like it. The doing one's whole duty was, in his mind, a matter of absolute obligation, and of general custom. Why should it be mentioned? Perhaps there are reasons for mentioning it, but they are fewer when, with a man like Mr. Walter, the thing is understood without words. His attitude was, at any rate, sufficient to win him the absolute devotion of those who worked with him on the paper. The devotion extended to all departments, mechanical as well as editorial. The compositors were devoted to him, and the pressmen; the very classes of working-men whom the trade-unions represent as victims of a huge tyranny. But the whole printing trade knew that printers were better off in this than in any other office in the country.

Of Mr. Walter's extreme simplicity of character I believe I said something in a former letter. It did not prevent him from living with magnificence. Bearwood, which he built, used to be called the second place in point of splendour in Berkshire; Windsor Castle being the first. That, of itself, would have given him importance, since in England to be the possessor of a great house and estate in the country is to be a considerable personage. A great fortune in the City or in business of any kind confers no similar distinction. Yet Mr. Walter never could understand why, either as owner of Bearwood or as owner of *The Times* or as both, he should be an object of interest to the public, or why anybody should want to know more of his opinions than they could collect from the columns of his

paper. He was amused by the fuss people made about his influence. That any one should try to interview him struck him as comical, though he never let it appear in that light to the would-be interviewer who probably went away with the feeling that he had been dismissed unsatisfied by a very dignified old gentleman. The very dignified old gentleman was, meantime, discoursing to his friends on the absurdity of interviewing 'every Tom, Dick, or Harry.' Probably he did not like interviewing as a practice. It belongs to the New Journalism ; to which he steadfastly preferred the old. There are others still of his mind.

Americans who have a great regard for the Queen—all Americans, that is—may be surprised to hear that one of Mr. Walter's unsatisfied ambitions, perhaps the only one, was to be received by the Queen. He said : 'I have known nearly all her Ministers, I have a very profound respect for her as a good woman, and I should like before I die to have five minutes' talk with her.' I cannot understand why he should not have had unless he were unwilling to take the necessary steps. Was it because he was regarded at Windsor as a newspaper man ?

There is, or was, an idea in America that *The Times* keeps a strict watch on its goodwill to the United States, and strictly represses all unguarded and expressive expressions of it. That may have been true enough in other days. Yet Mr. Walter, personally, had an unmistakable liking for America and Americans. He cherished the memory of his visits to the United States. There, as here, he refrained from showing how much he felt. I remember meeting him for the first time in Washington, I think in 1866, and coming away with the impression that he was extremely reserved, or even

frigid, in manner. A good many Americans had been asked to meet him at Mr. Forney's one evening. Some of them were men of distinction. Mr. Schuyler Colfax was one. He was at that time a person of distinction, and Speaker of the House, and it was thought necessary he should make a speech. The speech was of the kind then, and perhaps still, known as spread-eagle; had, I thought, already done duty on some Indiana platform for the delectation of Mr. Colfax's constituents. Mr. Walter's face was not, as a rule, remarkable for flexibility of expression, but nobody could doubt what it expressed on that occasion. This sudden ebullition of campaign oratory stiffened the Englishman; he became still more reserved in manner, as if aware that his face had already betrayed him, and the evening ended in constraint. Yet his friends thought he always unbent to Americans more than to his own countrymen. There was at one time a notion in Printing House Square—I mean the London one—that an American could get anything out of him, and that even some of those awful mysteries of *The Times* office which in London are impenetrable had somehow become matter of gossip in 'the States.' If there ever were revelations they certainly do not seem to have done much harm.

Mr. Walter's generosity was proverbial in his lifetime; his death has made it still better known. I hear of scores of letters from men whom he had befriended. None knew of it but the men themselves, and now that he is gone they unburden themselves of tributes to him. He gave money, he gave advice, he gave time, and he gave sympathy; outside as well as inside the office where, during generations, the wise liberality of the Walter family has been stereotyped into a custom.

He did not always know when to stop giving, any more than does the United States Government in the matter of pensions to its soldiers even unto the third and fourth generation, and for service not always soldierly or military. There was once made to him what he called a most impertinent request to continue to a son a pension which had been paid for twenty-three years to the widow of a man who had himself been a pensioner for seven years before. He showed at length, as he told the story, how it would be contrary to all economical laws, and almost contrary to morality, to continue it. 'Of course you refused,' said his friend. He might have said nothing, but he was incapable of compromising with the truth even by silence. Blushing as if he were confessing a crime, he said in his sternest tones, 'Most improperly I acceded to his request.'

With a glimpse of one other side of Mr. Walter's character, I end these desultory reminiscences. There was a question about a certain appointment on the staff of the paper, and he was consulted. The applicants numbered over seventy. Three names out of the seventy were submitted to him. One had the best certificates, but it appeared that he was of near kin to a man who had done Mr. Walter some wrong. He was asked which of the other two he preferred. He could not understand why his choice should be limited to the others. 'The best man must of course be appointed,' he said, and he was. That his relationship to an enemy should prevent this candidate's appointment never entered Mr. Walter's mind. There was no connection between the two things. He was incapable of visiting upon the children the sins of the fathers. It was thought in the office rather creditable that private

reasons should not be allowed to influence him against the selection of the best man. That, again, would probably have been to Mr. Walter an unintelligible idea. If these are not traits of a high character, what are? He may or may not have been a great man, but on his tombstone might be inscribed the testimony of one who was intimate with him: 'He was the best man I ever knew.' It is an ample eulogy, and one that may well endear his memory to those who care for loyalty of nature.

## FRANCIS MAGNARD

[LONDON, NOVEMBER 1894]

M. FRANCIS MAGNARD who died on Sunday was, on the whole, the first journalist of France. He was editor of the *Figaro*, which must be called, on the whole, the first journal of France, though that description of it requires a world of explanation in order to make it intelligible abroad and not misleading. The man and the newspaper have to be considered together. He was a journalist and nothing else, but he was one of the few journalists who may be said to contradict the rather cynical eulogy of Thiers upon journalism: that it was a very good profession if you got out of it in time. Magnard, who began life in some small civil service bureau, drifted early into newspaper writing. He was born in 1837. His connection with the *Figaro* dates from 1863; preceded, as usual, by experiments on other papers. But his relations of one kind or another with the journal of M. de Villemessant were never broken after they had once begun; they lasted thirty-one years. Nominally, he was since 1879 joint editor with M. de Rodays and M. Pèrivier who survive him. Actually, he controlled the paper. His was the guiding and deciding mind. His death may or may not mark a crisis in the fortunes of the journal. Men come and go. The great enterprises which they direct

do not necessarily go with them, nor suffer so much as might be expected by their departure.

Magnard was one of those rare journalists who could both edit and write, and do both supremely well. How many such are there in any country at any time? Even in New York they are not numerous. Mr. Dana is one, and it might not be difficult to draw a parallel between Mr. Dana and M. Magnard. The two men had a great deal in common; including the cool cynicism which enabled Mr. Dana to support Mr. Hill, and M. Magnard to be successively the advocate of Imperialism, of the Legitimists, of the Orleanists, and finally of the Republic. Both were scholars, both had that large foundation of knowledge which again, if not absolutely rare, is not held to be an indispensable condition of success at the editor's desk, or the writer's. Of the two great newspaper editors of the last generation, one in Europe, one in America, it might not be safe to affirm that either had the all-round excellence of M. Magnard. Mr. Delane, incomparably the first editor in all Europe, never wrote an editorial article. Mr. Horace Greeley, whose pen ran on a level with more minds than that of any other man in America, had less executive and administrative ability than many editors far inferior to him in other respects. It is therefore no light eulogy to say of M. Magnard that in both the two great departments of what we should like to consider a great profession he was excellent, and that, taking the two together, he had no rival in his own country.

His genius as a writer was of a very unusual kind. It was in truth unique, and the best proof of it is that a word had to be coined to express it; or two words. His proper name was turned into a common noun, and



'*faire un magnard*' meant to do an article like his. And the verb '*magnarder*' meant the same thing. It denoted more often the attempt to do it than any marked success on the part of his disciples or imitators. He was the inventor of the article, and though he did not patent it he kept the secret to himself. A '*magnard*' was a short editorial on the topic of the day. His genius shone equally in his choice of his topic and in his method of treating it. He wrote never more than one daily, and never a long one. I have read hundreds of them, or thousands. I cannot recall one which exceeded half a column, printed in very large type and signed F. M.

He had the gift, again a rare gift, of concision; and not merely of concision. It is easy to be brief, but to be brief and yet to say all that needs saying on a large subject, and to say it so that everybody will read, and perhaps even remember,—that is not easy. There was not in all France any writing read daily by so many people as M. Magnard's ten lines or half-column on politics, or social topics, or on whatever was the one subject about which he well knew everybody would want to read something next morning. There are always in the *Débats*, in the *Temps*, and in many another Paris paper, articles written with extraordinary ability, and in admirable literary form. So were there by other writers in the *Figaro*; *articles de fond*, as they are called. On the whole, they surpass, as mere pieces of literature, the best writing in the best journals of all other countries. And M. Magnard's few lines surpassed all these.

In shrewdness, in good sense, in pithiness, often in wit, and almost always in that quality which the French call *spirituel*, and for which the languages of England

and America have no adequate word, these articles were the best in the French press. M. Magnard thought with precision, and expressed himself in that symmetrical and balanced prose of which the French are the greatest masters in the world. He divined what others thought, and he held it to be his business as a journalist to express what others thought rather than what he himself thought. Whether he had any very settled principles or profound convictions may be a question. If he had, they were, to say the least, opportunist. The stuff of a martyr was not in him, nor is there much call for that high trait in the daily practice of newspaper-making. He had to write what people would read, and to put into this brief and telling form opinions which they would recognise as their own.

That was his business as both editor and editorial writer. He wrote as if at his ease and on good terms with his readers and with the world in general. He knew what men were saying on the boulevards and in the cafés. It may seem an easy kind of knowledge to acquire. It is in truth very difficult to acquire or to use. Many an editor has the raw material of such knowledge brought him by his reporters, and through the thousand channels which lead to his sanctum, and when he has got it does not know how to use it. Magnard did. That was what made the *Figaro* invaluable to the student of French affairs and of French public opinion. Magnard presented you each morning with the requisite quantity of political pemmican. Read twenty other papers and you did not know so well the direction and force of the currents of opinion on which for that day depended the fate of a Ministry, or the success of a loan, or the result of an election.

Probably M. Magnard was, in fact, a Conservative,

but a Conservative with a mind wide open to new ideas, and with no constitutional dislike to them, or at least to consider them. Hence it was that though, under M. de Villemessant's control and then under his, the *Figaro* was long Conservative under one flag or another, he was all the while preparing the way for its frank acceptance of the Republic. Of the Republic he liked neither the men nor the ideas, but he conquered what repugnance he had and accepted both, or accepted them without conquering his repugnance. He fought for Conservatism in the royalist sense so long as it had a chance. He certainly was one of the first on that side to see that its chance was gone. Then he made it his business to prepare the minds of his readers for the Conservative Republic. Beyond that he never went. He took no plunge into Radicalism, still less into Socialism. He was content to survey those seismic phenomena from the brink, or from the edge of the crater.

But when he had convinced himself that the day of mere reaction and mere sulking and mere dreaming was past, he entered, probably for the first time in his life, upon a missionary task. He set about converting his readers. To have preached at them would have been neither to his taste nor to theirs, and would have injured his paper without advancing his cause. But he gently instilled into the minds of his public certain ideas of politics not remote from those to which they had been accustomed, nor apparently hostile. He left these ideas to fertilise. There was no hurry, no forcing. The process went on for years. Each year the idea became a little more definite. With infinite tact and address and patience and with the most charming air of indifference, of scepticism, of expressing others'

opinions and not his own, of accepting only the inevitable, and even that not under compulsion, he brought round his journal to the point where he had long perceived it could alone find safe footing and keep its hold permanently on the public. Thus it was that the *Figaro* became Republican, and softly drew its public along the same difficult road to this end. He rendered immense service to the Republic, and he proved himself the most consummate French diplomatist of his day.

The journal which M. de Villemessant founded as a weekly, transformed into a daily, and handed on to M. Magnard, would not seem a good newspaper to the able editors of Chicago or Denver; perhaps not even in New York. It never had much of what in America is understood by news. That is because the Frenchman and the American mean different things by the word news. What the American means we know. What the Frenchman means may be seen by a glance at the columns of the *Figaro*. A column or two of 'Echos,' mostly personal and other local news of Paris; a column of 'Nouvelles Diverses;' half a column, often less, of telegrams from abroad; a money article, scraps of news from the provinces, a 'Courier des Théâtres,' from one to two columns, a racing chronicle of nearly the same length, scraps of other sport, sometimes an analysis of other papers, which was a specialty with M. Magnard. These are pretty much all the contents that relate to news. Add to them the leading article, often on art or a book, or a sketch of a celebrity, or an interview; other occasional articles, sometimes a leader on foreign affairs, and always a feuilleton, and you have the *Figaro*. There would be on great occasions, like the death of the Czar, a long telegram from some foreign capital.

Chicago or Denver would not, as I said, think much of this, yet they might look more respectfully upon it if they knew that M. Magnard had the skill to make the paper which contained it pay \$300,000 a year to its shareholders. That is, I presume, a sufficient testimony to his merits as editor, the more so as he rigidly kept down the advertising; making up by high prices for the narrowness of the space he would grant. I presume \$1 25 a line would be considered high even in New York.

Personally, M. Magnard was amiable, quiet, agreeable, cultivated, kindly, popular. He was a great reader, and his reading consisted mostly of the classics. Perhaps Chicago and Denver will reflect a moment on that. The most successful and competent French journalist of his time really thought that a constant perusal of the great classics was the best preparation for his work in journalism. From them he drew his inspiration; they taught him to write; they were his companions by day and by night. He had application and a prodigious memory; courage also, and a kind of quality which made men loyal to him; probably because he was loyal to them.

Since his death he has been praised for many qualities which he did not possess. It is a kindly feeling which leads men into vague panegyrics upon the dead, but of little avail. The man as he was—that is always attractive. Heroism he had in the endurance of great pain, but of heroism in the conduct of his journal little or none. Nor is journalism as a rule a heroic business. One of his colleagues extols his love of truth, his probity, his passion for justice, his independence, his loftiness of character. These must be taken as personal tributes. M. Magnard may have had all these traits

in private life and in his personal relations. They were not those which he found it useful to display most frequently in the paper he edited. It is better to say frankly that he lifted that paper to as high a level as its public would permit; and there remained.

## LORD RANDOLPH CHURCHILL

[NEW YORK, JANUARY 1895]

### I

LORD RANDOLPH'S sun goes down in a sky all clouds and gloom; the brilliancy of his noonday obscured, perhaps half forgotten. It is likely in such circumstances that less than justice will be done him, far less. He may be classed among the men who have failed, and to those contemporaneous opinion is apt to be pitiless. The more reason why an attempt should be made by those who knew him and knew his rare qualities to speak of him as he really was—to do him that justice which the majority may deny him. He is almost equally interesting on the political and personal sides. His public career has been unique, and there was nobody like him in private life. I can but touch on the salient features. There is more to be said about Lord Randolph than can be said in the crowded columns of a newspaper. I will waste no space on well-known facts or on matters likely to come out otherwise. And first a word or two on some incidents of his public life.

Those who call his public life a failure judge by results merely; seldom a scientific method. If we study a man, the real question is what kind of a man was he, not merely what did circumstances permit him to accomplish. They say he was unbalanced. It is

true enough in a sense, and its truth makes his success the more wonderful. Let us take the House of Commons. If there be a Legislative body in the world where balance, judgment, tact, discretion, and many other such endowments are essential to success, the House of Commons is that body. Lord Randolph was a member of it for twenty years. He was one of its foremost members for more than half that time. He was its leader for the last six months of 1886. The oldest member of that House is Mr. Charles Villiers, who has sat in it without a break since 1835 and is known as its Father; one of the Anti-Corn Law leaders in company with Cobden and Bright; a man of singularly acute, penetrating, judicial mind. Nobody's opinion is worth more, and nobody has had more experience of the House. He said of Lord Randolph Churchill—I am quoting what he said to me—that during his acquaintance with the House, then of more than half a century, he had known no man who, in the qualities essential to leadership of the House, had surpassed Lord Randolph. Think what that means. Mr. Villiers's observation includes Peel, Palmerston, Lord John Russell, Disraeli, Mr. Gladstone. All these were leaders of the House. Each was regarded in his own day as the greatest of its leaders. They are names which ring in the ear of the world. They were tremendous forces in English parliamentary life. And the most competent parliamentary observer puts Lord Randolph as leader on a level with the best of them.

I once quoted Mr. Villiers to a Liberal member, now living, a Radical Liberal; he too a man of penetration and judgment. 'It is perfectly true,' he said. 'Nobody knows it better than we who sat opposite him, opposed him, lay in wait for him, and would have upset



him if we could. There never, probably, was a House more difficult to lead than the House as it was from July to December 1886. Randolph led it without a mistake. His own party was divided. He asserted and established his authority. The political situation was full of pitfalls. He walked unerringly amid them all.' And he went on at great length to explain how it was that Lord Randolph showed himself master of his party and of the House, and of the art of guiding it whithersoever he would.

And yet, at the end of the period illuminated by his consummate ability, came the mistake which closed his public career. If you put the two together, you may begin to have some notion how and why it was that all these brilliant gifts were doomed to be of so little lasting service to their possessor and to the public. It was in December 1886 that he wrote the letter to Lord Salisbury which has always been called a letter of resignation. Some day it will be published in full and the full history of it will be known; and of the causes which led to the writing of it. I think I know the story pretty well but it is much too long to tell here, and the details of it belong to that English political history which the American public reads with interest when they have long ceased to be of immediate importance. The Greville of the future will give them—perhaps Sir Henry Calcraft. But there are two or three things to be said. That letter, written and dated from Windsor Castle, was not meant as a letter of resignation. It was meant as a hint, perhaps as a menace, of resignation. But the old Obadiah—perhaps you remember the music-hall song of that day—was a more cunning hand than the young Obadiah. He saw that the young Obadiah had given himself away; that the

letter could be construed as one of absolute withdrawal from the Ministry. Personally, Lord Salisbury was fond of his young rival. His reply began, 'My dear Randolph.' Politically, he thought him a mistake or a danger. Their relations as Leader of the Party and Leader of the House of Commons had long been strained. Their conceptions of public duty were different. They did not get on together. Lord Salisbury, to tell the plain truth, jumped at the chance which his Chancellor of the Exchequer gave him, and gravely accepted a resignation which had never been offered. When Lord Randolph saw his error it was too late to repair it.

How came he to make it? Some of the causes are on the surface, some lie deep in his character. Lord Randolph took, rightly, a high view of his duties as Leader of the House of Commons. He held that the House could only be well led by a Minister in full possession of the policy of his chief, and with full knowledge of what the Prime Minister was doing outside the House. Lord Salisbury was not only Prime Minister. He really directed the Foreign Office, of which, not long after, he became titular head while retaining his place as Prime Minister. He cared more for Foreign Affairs than for anything else. He did not see why Lord Randolph should also care. He hated interference or inquiry. He thought it the duty of the Leader of the House of Commons to lead and have done with it, and not to be always asking for interviews with his chief, and wanting to know things, and advising, and explaining to the Prime Minister in the Lords what could and what could not be done in the Commons. Randolph, he said, got on his nerves. He recognised his value but wanted him out of the way.

Besides, the contentions in the Cabinet vexed the head of that august body. Lord Randolph, there as elsewhere, was bent on having his own way and not always over-particular how he got it. A Cabinet conflict was the immediate occasion of the resignation crisis; a dispute between Lord Randolph as Chancellor of the Exchequer and Lord George Hamilton as First Lord of the Admiralty. Lord George drew the Naval Estimates in a form to which Lord Randolph would not agree. Like all Chancellors of the Exchequer he was in his official capacity stingy; curiously unlike the Lord Randolph of private life. Ultimately, the sum in dispute between them did not exceed £600,000, but on this the Chancellor wrote his letter. That was the pretext. Really, it was a struggle who was to be master in the Cabinet, Lord Randolph or Lord Salisbury.

That was a point which had to be settled, and there it is that the question of character comes in. The young Leader of the House could ill brook any master. He knew his own worth. He was by nature a little arbitrary, sometimes arrogant, always wilful, and perhaps prone to violent courses. He believed himself indispensable. That was matter of calculation, not of temperament merely. He was very capable of calculation and of estimating political forces accurately. He had surveyed the field. There was not in the Conservative party any man then able to replace him in both the offices he held. He looked upon Mr. W. H. Smith as a joke. Smith and Cross were Marshall and Snelgrove—a firm of Oxford Street drapers—and the only thing, said the young aristocrat in his biting way, which had ever puzzled him was to determine which was Marshall and which was Snelgrove. It was possible

Smith might be made Leader, though he would be received with derision, but who would be Chancellor of the Exchequer?

There was but one mistake in this calculation, but it was fatal. Lord Randolph forgot to look outside the ranks of his own party. He forgot Mr. Goschen, then a Liberal Unionist; one of the eminent men whom Mr. Gladstone had driven out of the party in order to take up Home Rule. Forgetting Mr. Goschen and despising Mr. Smith, he counted on the refusal of his suggestion of resignation, on remaining in the Cabinet, on having his own way about Naval Estimates and other things, on becoming the real dictator of the Cabinet while leaving Lord Salisbury as Prime Minister. Mr. Goschen's acceptance of office brought this well-thought-out scheme to grief and utter wreck. Lord Randolph went into political exile, and in political exile he remained till his death. Among his friends and with the public, the question of his return to office was often mooted. Lord Salisbury was inflexible. The rumour of the day imputed to him a savage remark when one of his late colleague's friends opened negotiations for his recall. 'If I have had a wen cut out of my arm, do you think I want it to grow again?' We may be permitted to hope that he never said this. He was commonly believed to have said it; and the more readily believed because it happened that he did in fact submit to such an operation about that time; in the literal and physical, not metaphorical, sense.

Lord Randolph's friends always talked of his resignation as one of those impulsive indiscretions which he might have avoided, and but for which he would surely have reached the height of his ambition. I fear not. It was a lesson he had to learn, and the learning of it

cost him his political life, and perhaps in the end his life in this world. He was not born to go well in harness. The conflict with Lord Salisbury had to come. If it had not come then, it would have come later. It was, politically speaking, a life and death struggle. The older man was the stronger and the more sagacious, and had more of the confidence of the party and of the country. Between two such men in such circumstances the result which actually befell in December '86 would have been inevitable had the duel been postponed. Lord Salisbury is often called rash. In some respects he is, and there are forces which he undervalues and tendencies of which he fails to take account; prejudices also, and convictions, against which he sets himself wantonly. But the country knows, and his opponents know, that he is a serious politician; a statesman in the high sense.

They were never quite sure whether Lord Randolph was. They gave him but a guarded confidence. They thought him brilliant, but erratic; very able, but sometimes impulsive; and many doubted whether the convictions which he held, and which he expressed with transcendent force, were permanent or perhaps only transitory. He did not know how to win that trust which is given to men of far less ability; a trust which comes from the belief in stability of character and of principle. Some of the colleagues on whom he poured out his contempt were more trusted than he was. Some of the men least like him in history were trusted. He was not of the stamp of Lord Althorp, of the present Duke of Devonshire, a man wholly devoid of Lord Randolph's sparkling traits, though his equal and perhaps superior in solid capacity; in whom the country does believe profoundly, though to read his speeches is

not commonly thought an exhilarating pastime. The Duke's speeches are read for instruction, not for epigram or for their imaginative splendour.

Lord Randolph deserved, I think, more confidence than was given him. He was his own worst enemy in some things. His course through the political heavens was meteoric, not planetary. He puzzled not only the political astronomers, but the ordinary gazer who looks at things as they are. The ordinary person could not feel quite sure where this luminary would next appear. Such are some of the reasons which explain the political eclipse of a man who had held and adorned some of the greatest posts in public life, who had won the admiration of the best judges, who had capacities and qualities possessed by few of his contemporaries, who had in truth a very high order of political genius, who was almost equally admirable in the House and on the platform, who was long the idol of a great public, the champion of a party, the leader of a great Legislature, and once the probable Prime Minister of England.

## II

While Lord Randolph was a member of the Fourth Party, it was one of his favourite occupations to 'draw' Mr. Gladstone. Others have possessed that power. The Fourth Party had four members in all: the other three being Mr. Arthur Balfour, Sir Henry Drummond Wolff, and Sir John Gorst. Widely different have been their fates. Sir John Gorst has retained something of the guerilla, and, though he held office as Financial Secretary to the Treasury toward the end of the Salisbury Ministry, he has taken excursions into the misty regions of Socialism, and at times played a

lone hand. Sir Henry Wolff is Ambassador at Madrid and out of politics : a great post honourably and brilliantly filled. Mr. Balfour is what we all know ; leader of his party in the Commons in succession to his old comrade, and one of the foremost figures in the public life of England. It was Lord Randolph's fate to see himself passed in the race by his most intimate friends ; perhaps as bitter a drop as any in the cup.

But, as I was saying, it was Lord Randolph who, out of this select band, had the gift, or privilege, or both, of bringing Mr. Gladstone to his feet most often. The young man had studied the old. He knew where to aim his shafts. So impulsive was the Old Parliamentary Hand that he had need of all his wariness in debate once he was on his legs. The impulse spent itself in rising. Often he had better have sat still ; but the mistake, if there was one, was never in what he said but in saying anything at all. The spirit of mischief was, in Lord Randolph, judiciously kept in check by an exact sense of what was profitable to the party, or to that particular section of it with which he was identified. He had with him, to a certain extent, the sympathies of the House, which was always grateful to anybody who would provide it with sport, and most grateful of all when Mr. Gladstone could be entangled in controversy. The younger and elder men were alike masters of debate, of repartee, and of that dignified courtesy which makes retort most damaging. Mr. Gladstone's manner was his own and none other ever equalled it. Lord Randolph, rude in speech though he might sometimes be, was ever mindful of what was due to himself. He had the bearing of the patrician he was. He was an aristocrat in the good sense. The memory of the many brief encounters between the

two will live long in the House. It is a cherished tradition.

I owe to Lord Randolph himself an account of his one personal interview with Mr. Gladstone on public business. It was while he was Chancellor of the Exchequer. Mr. Gladstone was then at Dollis Hill, the Kilburn villa which Lord Aberdeen put at his disposal as often and as long as he cared to use it; half an hour's drive from Connaught Place, where Lord Randolph then lived. Finance is one of the two or three subjects which have always had a permanent interest for the great Liberal, and he had asked the young Conservative Chancellor of the Exchequer to come out and talk with him on some points then at issue with respect to the public accounts. He went the next afternoon, and was received by Mr. Gladstone under an apple-tree in the garden. You may be certain that on neither side was there a thought of the political antagonism between them, or of their contests in the House. Such contests in England seldom leave any bitterness behind. They met as two English gentlemen who had something to discuss. They had a long talk. Mr. Gladstone stated his views with that tremendous energy so characteristic of him; putting all his force of character as well as all his force of intellect into the argument. 'For the first time in my life,' said Lord Randolph, 'I felt myself in the presence of a superior being.' That always seemed to me a remarkable confession. It became more so when he went on to draw a kind of contrast between Mr. Gladstone and Lord Salisbury. 'I have known Lord Salisbury all my life intimately. I was his friend and colleague. He was my chief. He is a great man and a great leader, with the mental range and force of character



you know. It never occurred to me to be afraid of him, or to think of myself with reference to him as other than an equal. A better man than I, no doubt, and an older, but still of the same clay. Mr. Gladstone is a being apart. You know how the royalties regard themselves, as if they were of another race and the meanest royalty far above the highest of other than royal blood. That is the impression Gladstone made on me. He was not merely greater, but dissimilar. I had to discuss finance with him. I did the best I could with the discussion and argument, as I do in the House, where I never hesitated to face him, as you know. In private it is another matter. I could argue, but before the man himself I bent.'

Hard things, I see, are said about Lord Randolph's hard hitting in his House of Commons controversies with Mr. Gladstone. He himself admitted, with the generous frankness that was in him, that he sometimes struck too heavily. You commented the other day on his description of his great opponent in 1886 as an old man in a hurry. It was the one thing which Lord Randolph himself most regretted. 'But,' I said, 'it was a perfectly true and picturesque account of the matter.' He would not admit that the truth of it atoned for the severity. 'Of course it was true,' he admitted. 'It summed up the situation. Never would Gladstone have taken the line he did, or dealt with Home Rule in the way he did, or tyrannised over his party as he did, had he been twenty years younger. But I ought not to have said it.' Perhaps you will accept that as a kind of atonement for the phrase which so wounded the sensibilities of Mr. Gladstone's American idolaters. As for the sharp things said in debate, they were said on both sides; and seldom in

England do political opponents bear malice for such reasons.

Lord Randolph, be it remembered, was in a position where he had to make himself felt. He stood for a long time almost alone. Mr. Gladstone stood alone also, but on an eminence almost inaccessible, with a great multitude encamped about him. It has been said, and truly said, that since the translation of Disraeli to the House of Lords, but two men have really faced Mr. Gladstone in the Commons ; first Lord Randolph and then Mr. Arthur Balfour. The two had very different methods, and a parallel between them would be instructive were there time, or were it my business to be instructive. Briefly, the difference was this : Lord Randolph preferred invective ; Mr. Balfour a cool, cynical, purely intellectual and humorous, sometimes even contemptuous, manner. Of debate and of argument each was a master. But Mr. Balfour was never, and is never, so deadly as when in his lightest tone ; and he thrusts home with a smile on his lips, almost without an effort. Lord Randolph sometimes blustered and often felt, or assumed, a passion. But he never lost sight of his audience or of his purpose.

When he spoke of Mr. Gladstone and his colleagues as men who had on their souls the blood of the massacres of Maiwand, and of Laing's Neck, and of Phoenix Park, he had no more in mind than had Gordon when he sent from Khartoum the memorable despatch about his abandonment by the Gladstone Ministry, and the 'indelible disgrace' stamped on that Ministry and its leader. You may agree or condemn—that is not the point—but of Gordon's sincerity of resentment and of Lord Randolph's sincerity of pur-

pose there can be no doubt. Thus it was that he led up to the overstrung climax of the Moloch of Midlothian. That, of course, gave offence, as did Disraeli's Bath letter, with its 'plundering and blundering' indictment of Mr. Gladstone. To the Gladstone worshipper even civil dissent is an offence. Yet they are a plain-spoken people, these English, with, nevertheless, a general moderation of phrase quite as remarkable as their overflow of rhetoric when passion sets in. And which do you think, on the whole, most abstemious in print, the English or ourselves? The English press or the American? Let us not pursue that inquiry too far.

Lord Randolph spent a long apprenticeship. When he came to the front, he came decisively. He took the lead of his party and of all the Conservative forces of the country. Strictly speaking, of course, he never was leader of his party. Lord Salisbury was leader. But there are more kinds of leadership than one, and Lord Randolph's was the leadership of ideas. I have written so much about him of late years that it is difficult not to repeat what has been said at various times as he stood on the summit of political life. But it is safe to assume that what is said in a newspaper is forgotten before the next number appears, and I must once more give Lord Randolph his due as the man, the one man next after Disraeli, who set the Conservatives on the right path. Under Disraeli took place the transformation from Tories to Conservatives. Under Lord Randolph the Conservatives became for the first time, in a measure, democratic. If he had had his way the measure would have been full, and perhaps Conservatism would have given way far more completely to Democracy.

The new departure dates from the Dartford speech. It was followed by many other speeches similar in tone and in aim. In the true meaning of the phrase he was a great moral force in politics. He had something more than political insight and courage. He took large and broad views. He saw that the commanding authority had passed once for all in 1884 with the new franchise to the Democracy. The upper and middle classes had become a minority. They could no longer control the masses, but they could still lead them. He set himself to lead them ; to ally his party with them ; to bring them into the party ranks ; to use his own party in their interests. The Conservative party, in his judgment, had no future unless broad-based upon the people's will.

Amid all his vacillations and inconsistencies, to this he adhered. I do not think a passage could be quoted later than 1884 in which he ever swerved from this fundamental conviction. Lord Salisbury never had it. Mr. Balfour did not come in time to announce it, even if he had accepted it. To Lord Randolph belongs, and will for ever belong, the imperishable renown of democratising the party which some of you still think of as the party of reaction in England. There is no reaction, no party of reaction, no Tory party, and even Lord Salisbury is perforce the pupil and, in no slight degree, the disciple of the young lieutenant whom he drove from public life.

There is no recent instance of political ingratitude comparable to that which sent Lord Randolph at thirty-seven into private life, banished him from the councils of his party, ruined his career in more senses than one, and gave into other hands the inheritance rightfully his. The Conservatives have cast lots for

his raiment, or if that must not be applied, let us borrow a more modern yet still celebrated image, and say that they have stolen his clothes while he was bathing,—out of his depth it may be, but who pushed him in? No such view is likely to be expressed in England by his old associates. They are not likely to choose this occasion to confess their sins, or to sit on the stool of repentance. Why should they? Do we expect generosity in politics? Do we expect justice? Are we just to him even here? Yet between Lord Randolph and America there are ties. There are close personal ties, but of these I do not speak. It cannot be needful to remind anybody that his American wife has long been one of the most brilliant figures in the social life of England, or to dwell on her devotion to him during all this last illness and the journey which certainly hastened the end. I speak of political ties. There was not at one time any Englishman whose political ideas were so closely akin as his to those ideas which are essentially and vitally American. Let us at least keep that in mind while we undertake to pass judgment.

## III

To write of Lord Randolph on the personal side, or to confide one's impressions of his character to the public, is no easy matter. To write quite freely is out of the question. It is a case of the truth but not the whole truth. He would, in my judgment, gain if the whole truth about him were known; still, it is impossible. How can I tell whether the mere written narrative of certain facts or traits would impress the public as he himself impressed those who knew him? There must be a selection. Everything cannot be

told. It is never easy to give a true summary of a character. In Lord Randolph's case it is less easy than in most. He was so many sided, so complex, often, at least on the surface, so contradictory or inconsistent, sometimes so unjust to himself, and during the greater part of his life so beset by circumstances, that nothing less than a full biography could be adequate. I hope a biography will be written. It must be done by some one who knew him or it will be of little avail; must be sympathetic yet critical, and discreet while it is free. No easy task. I do not attempt it. As memories crowd upon me—they commonly do with a pen in hand—one feels the perplexity the more, and it becomes simpler to touch on a few points which may disclose to the reader who cares for him some of the salient traits of this strenuous nature. The reader who does not already care may pass by on the other side.

I begin with a topic which is perhaps the most delicate of all, or of all but one—Lord Randolph's relations with his mother, the Duchess Dowager of Marlborough. She idolised him. She talked of him often to those whom she knew to be his friends, and she thought of him continuously. She made sacrifices for him; to her they were none because they were for him. In him her life centred, wide as were her other interests, domestic and general. Can it have been other than a lovable nature which inspired such a love as this; an affection which was both spontaneous and considered, reasoned, critical even? It is perhaps the best kind of affection which takes account of all defects, remains in spite of them a deep and engrossing affection.

So of the regard which springs up between men.

Lord Randolph had troops of friends, and retained them to the last, friends among the best. Birth and position gave him a start, gave him the opportunity of knowing and being known; the rest depended on himself. He attached to him men of the most various kinds. I sometimes thought he had too wide a tolerance. Boulanger was an instance both of his cosmopolitanism of sympathy and of his extreme lenity of judgment. Whether because of his carelessness about foreign politics, or for other reasons, he really believed that Boulanger would be the ruler of France. His royalist friends in Paris misled him. He ought not to have been misled, but he was. The Comte de Paris, M. De Breteuil, and many more were among his associates and intimates. They were deceived about this cheap Pretender, and they deceived others.

Lord Randolph, believing what he did, thought it desirable that Boulanger should be known in London by the right people. He did his best to make his reception cordial, and to get him into relations with those who might influence opinion in his favour. At this time he had long outlived the social disfavour into which, on account of a quarrel with the Prince of Wales, he had fallen. He was in a position to do as much as almost anybody. He tried his best. The Prince of Wales, to the consternation of his political friends, met Boulanger at dinner at Lord Randolph's house. The Prince and some of his set excepted, hardly anybody would meet him. Military men, and a few men about town, and a few women who visited Paris often, and were friends with the Faubourg St. Germain, were present at these dinners. The serious and judicious stayed away. I asked Lord Randolph while Boulanger was still in London whether he thought

it worth while to persevere in view of the evident coldness of London toward him and, as I thought, the certainty of his failure in Paris. 'Failure!' cried Lord Randolph, 'I shall be his guest at the Elysée next November.' It was near June. Long before November Boulanger was a fugitive, and he ended as we all know. But Lord Randolph was never prone to take too much account of the opinion of others.

There you have one of the keys to his character, and to such measure of success and also of failure as was his in life. He was a born leader of men; not a follower. Of his own powers he was fully conscious; in them and in himself he had an undoubting confidence; not overweening, but complete. Once, when he was on the point of taking a step which promised to be disastrous, I said to him that the judgment of everybody whose opinion was worth having was against him. He turned sharply: 'Do you think,' he asked, 'that I should be where I am if I had gone according to the judgment of other people?' He was then at the height of his fame and authority. 'I have had against me,' he went on, 'at every step the judgment of those whose opinion, as you say, is worth having. I have uniformly disregarded it. I have led my own life, taken my own views, acted on them, and here I am.'

It was perfectly true—true in public life; true also in private, where the results were more doubtful. He never seemed to shrink from any conflict, or to hesitate about any cause because others thought it unwise. Of course, he often did hesitate. Impulsive as he was he reflected long. He used the opinions of other men as materials for forming a judgment of his own. It might coincide with the judgment of others or, far more



often, conflict with it, but in both cases it was his judgment and not theirs by which he guided his course.

He has often been discussed as if he were flippant in thought or the slave of his caprices. He was nothing of the kind. No man gave a more serious consideration to any serious subject. His mind, it is true, worked rapidly, and the slow men thought him frivolous because he was neither slow nor solemn.

In fact, he mastered his subjects. Ask the permanent officials at the India Office, where he was Secretary of State in 1885. Ask the magnates of the Treasury what they thought of him as Chancellor of the Exchequer in 1886. Of India he had some knowledge before he undertook to rule it, but of Indian business little or none. In finance he was reckoned at the start an amateur. But in both these great offices he soon showed himself more than the equal of the experts, and over both he bore sway. It is seldom that a parliamentary chief does more than reign over a great department. Lord Randolph reigned and governed. I will not recur to politics. This has to do with politics indirectly, but it is the personal trait on which I am dwelling; and a vital element in Lord Randolph's character. Analyse it and you see that it was made up in part of intellectual independence and in part of courage. Nobody ever thought Lord Randolph deficient in courage; needless, therefore, to dwell on that. But of courage there are several kinds, and in him there was a fearlessness and gallantry which were heroic, and of an earlier time.

There was no neutral side to his character. He either repelled or fascinated you, and most men, and also women, were fascinated. He never seemed to care about it one way or the other. He took no pains to

conciliate or to win over people. He was himself. He talked on a great variety of matters but chose the topic because it interested him, not in order to interest others. In that he resembled Mr. Gladstone, who was never known to make the least attempt to adapt himself to the company but expected the company to adapt itself to him; as it generally did. His talk—Lord Randolph's, not Mr. Gladstone's—was a series of scintillations. I have heard him in all sorts of companies and circumstances. If it were mere politics, he was content sometimes with mere precision and authority; keeping his mind, as it were, in harness and strictly considering the question before him, or the point on which he sought to convert others. If he was opposed he sometimes became impatient, though more often the impatience seemed to be intellectual. He had a scorn of sluggish minds, nor did he always give himself the trouble to conceal it. Conventionalities never meant much to him. He simply put them aside, yet such was his natural dignity and such his aristocratic training that his outbursts seldom gave offence. Careless of giving offence he might be, but he did not give it wilfully unless provoked; unless in the manner or tone of his opponent he detected a sneer, or an affectation of superiority.

For example, he was once known to discuss the question of Civil Service appointments in a little group of men which included the eminent Liberal Unionist sometimes known as the Autocrat of the Midlands, of which Birmingham is the political if not the geographical centre. Lord Randolph had lately returned from his tour in India. He inveighed against the state of the Indian Civil Service. Mr. Chamberlain defended it from that Radical and perhaps pedantic point of

view to which a knowledge of logarithms seems a sufficient proof of capacity for public life. 'You must see the men at work,' retorted Lord Randolph. 'I have seen them. There are good men, but the average is not good. The old system was better.' 'The old system?' queried Mr. Chamberlain,—'a system of jobs and nepotism?' 'Well,' answered this descendant of the great Duke of Marlborough, 'I suppose they did job, but the men they put in were gentlemen. Whereas now'—and there came a brief pause—'now we get men from Birmingham and God knows where.'

That illustrates one of his moods, and not the most attractive. Like most Englishmen, he was at his best either as host in his London house or—and this is the more frequent—in a house in the country, whether his own or another's. His London dinners were celebrated; even his dinners of men; a form of entertainment for which most men care less than for those which are mixed. But Lord Randolph was no ordinary host, nor were his guests ordinary. Dull men he would not have; not, at any rate, those whom he himself found dull. There was a time when at the house in Connaught Place Mr. Balfour was the most constant guest, coming and going as he liked as if he were one of the family. Sir Henry Drummond Wolff was another intimate, and never ceased to be an intimate except from absence. To attempt a catalogue would be to make a roll-call of the men and women most illustrious in England. I mentioned one of these festivals above. There was another which became celebrated as the dinner of deadly enemies. It pleased Lord Randolph and his American wife to pair off the deadly enemies, so to speak, at table. The experiment was a wonderful success. It was almost literally true that each man or woman

found himself or herself confronted with some other between whom and themselves there was a feud. I abstain from indicating these hostilities, but I may say that among the guests were the Prince and Princess of Wales, Mr. and Mrs. Gladstone, and Mr. and Mrs. Chauncey Depew. No animosities between these, at any rate. If the situation had been far more perilous, the host and hostess would have saved it. But these adventures can never be frequent.

I pass from such topics. The last years are those which leave, if not the deepest, the most recent impressions;—the years when the light was failing and the end near. His journey round the world was begun in defiance of his physicians' orders. They wanted him to go to Norway. He was implacable to medical opinion and came to New York, whence Mr. Depew, by some kindly diplomacy and with much railway contrivance for his comfort and an uninterrupted journey, despatched him to Bar Harbour. From the time he left that spot the record of his life was one of annoyance, rapidly failing power, increasing mental disturbances, and incessant anxiety to his admirable wife. No need to dwell on that, any more than on the part of his career which was spent on the Turf, or on other distractions from the weariness of inactivity. The Randolph of his prime is the one his friends will always prefer to remember; the gifted, gallant, generous soul, with his high notions of life, his irrepressible individuality, his great services, and the incomparable interest which attended him. You might like or dislike him; indifferent you could not be. You had often to criticise and dissent; you had almost always to admire, and you could never forget.

For many years I used to pass his door most morn-

ings, and sometimes went in. He sat in a large room on the ground floor, a library, plainly a working room, elegant withal, and furnished with a luxurious convenience which most working men might envy. There were bookcases, writing-tables—one on which might be spread out at once the material for a dozen speeches or topics. He always had a secretary with him, sometimes two; often a friend who had looked in on his way to the city; most probably a financial magnate. There he read and thought and wrote, with the ordered landscape of Hyde Park stretching away before his windows; a view of singular loveliness and extent in the heart of a great city. He worked liked a slave. I know the popular notion is otherwise, but it is untrue and unjust. Such political authority and prestige as he had acquired do not come to an idle man. I spoke of his rapidity. A distinguished lawyer has an anecdote on that point. Lord Randolph was asked to appear as a witness against Mr. Shaw Lefevre's mad scheme of a tunnel railway beneath Hyde Park, starting from the Marble Arch, which Lord Randolph's house faced. He attended at the hour named. 'Of course, I am against the scheme,' he said to this lawyer, 'but I know nothing about the plan or the details. If I am to be a good witness you must give me the points.' So, for ten minutes or a little more, the lawyer laid the case before him; then the witness was called. The lawyer described the result: 'Randolph was asked but a question. Starting from that, he delivered an argument against the bill, so close, so full, so cogent, so complete in its mastery of the facts and of the whole case against the bill, that when he had finished there remained nothing to be said. The project was dead. I asked him when it was over why he pretended to

know nothing of the matter. "I give you my word of honour," answered he, "that I was absolutely ignorant of the whole subject when I began my talk with you." Such was his power of grasping a subject. I thought it a more astonishing power than I had myself ever known at the Bar.'

When all hope of return to the Salisbury Ministry had vanished, it was still thought likely that some high post abroad would be found for Lord Randolph. India was talked of, but Lord Salisbury shook his head. The notion of his ex-colleague as the ruler of 200,000,000 of Mussulmans and Hindoos gave him a cold fit. The old question, 'What Randolph would do?' recurred. He would have been a supremely able Viceroy; not always a safe one. And a Viceroy may commit the Empire to a new departure before he could be stopped by a telegram from Whitehall. When the Embassy at Paris fell vacant Lord Randolph was in South Africa. He wired home that he would accept it if offered. I could give you the name of the friend to whom the despatch was sent. Every influence was brought to bear on Lord Salisbury. He so far yielded as to sound the Foreign Office at Paris, or perhaps the Elysée, in order, as the custom is, to make sure that Lord Randolph would be acceptable to the Government to which he was to be accredited.

A peremptory No came back. This was the Nemesis which his political coquetries with Boulanger and the Royalists brought upon him. To Lord Randolph personally the French Government offered no objection. To the friend and ally of that ignoble adventurer who had aimed at the life of the French Republic they had a rooted objection. He was in their eyes compromised past redemption by his intrigues—or what they thought

such—with Boulanger and the Orleanist aiders and abettors of that very contemptible yet at one time undoubtedly very dangerous conspirator. And so slipped hopelessly away from Lord Randolph the one real opportunity of his later years.

## GEORGE WILLIAM CURTIS

[WHITE STAR STEAMSHIP 'MAJESTIC,' FEBRUARY 1895]

IN a parcel of books which a friend sent me for the voyage was a copy of George William Curtis's *Literary and Social Essays*, published—or at any rate dated—this year in New York by Messrs. Harper. I had not seen it in England, nor had I for a long time read anything of Curtis's except an occasional address, or except his ever-admirable and graceful work in the Editor's Easy Chair of *Harper's Magazine*. But I knew Curtis a little and knew something about his life, which was a life of high ideals, and knew of course his public fame. I had, moreover, lately learned from Mr. Laurence Hutton, whom I read with pleasure, that when he died Curtis was the first American citizen. Nor was I disposed to quarrel with that apotheosis of a good American, whose goodness and whose good Americanism by no means prevented him from being individual or from cherishing some views of public affairs which were those of the minority and not of the majority.

Only I did not see why Mr. Laurence Hutton need use Curtis's name to beat Carlyle with, or invoke his memory in order to emphasise a personal protest against the memorial to Carlyle which some of us are trying to accomplish. Nor do I think Curtis would have liked this use of his name, or have joined in such a protest.



For, with all his intense Americanism, he had none of the narrowness which some Americans—I do not mean Mr. Hutton—would make a badge of Americanism. Curtis—and this book shows it on many a page—whether he was the first American citizen or not, was a citizen of the world of letters. If Patriotism is writ large on all his work, perhaps Humanity is writ larger still. I do not forget his public services when I say that literature was to him as the breath of the air which he breathed. A great writer, be he American or English, was to him a great writer. If honour were to be done to the memory of a great writer, Curtis was not, I think, the man to stop to ask under what flag he gave to the world the books which are a world's inheritance. From Carlyle he certainly was far apart, and of the social philosophy which he of Chelsea taught for half a century Curtis was no disciple. That, I am sure, would never have kept his hand out of his pocket had he been asked to subscribe to a Carlyle Memorial. He could not but recognise the greatness of the writer, the greatness of the force in literature for which Carlyle's name stands, and will ever stand. I was told in New York that there is in America a reaction against Carlyle. I do not know whether that is so, or what the extent of the reaction is, if reaction there be. But I should admit no man's right to connect George William Curtis with it, or to use to the prejudice of his fellow-author the just regard which Americans have for the friend of Carlyle's friend Emerson.

It is what Curtis wrote forty years ago of Emerson which has led me to say thus much on a point not directly connected with the book on which I wish to write briefly. The book as a whole has left a deep

impression, and a still deeper of the man who wrote it. With two exceptions, the subjects of these *Literary and Social Essays* are American. In the best sense the treatment of them is also American. In the narrow sense it is not American at all. There is no limitation of view by latitude and longitude. There is no attempt to set up a new standard or a new canon of literature which shall be geographical. Not a page of the book could have been written by a man

‘Who had narrowed his mind,  
And to party gave up what was meant for mankind.’

That was not Curtis's way. When he has to judge an American he gets outside of America. His critical standpoint is not American, nor English, nor French. It has nothing to do with locality. It is universal. Even when he writes of Emerson and of Hawthorne, his foot is not more firmly planted on Plymouth Rock than on the Rock of Ages. He has in him the note of universality with respect both to place and time. Who is there who thinks him the less American for that? What is America but an amalgam of nationalities, and the final result of ages of civilisations, outworn some of them before she was discovered, living some of them side by side with her? Curtis is an expression of much of what is best in these. He has the ripeness of mind which is of long descent. He has the vigour which belongs to his own country and his own time. He has the charm to which culture and character have alike contributed. ‘That country is fairest,’ said Emerson, ‘which is inhabited by the noblest minds.’ Of that country Curtis was a citizen. Neither Atlantic nor Pacific bounds it. America is not enough. The nineteenth century is not enough. To make acquaint-

ance with all the noblest you must explore the surface of the globe and the annals of all time.

The essay upon Emerson is not so much a criticism as a picture, and the picture is mostly landscape. This is what Emerson would have liked. The date of it is 1854, and the descriptive character of the sketch is partly explained by its appearance in a publication entitled *Homes of American Authors*. The paper on Hawthorne saw the light in the same publication and is of similar character. But it was impossible for Curtis while describing Concord and Emerson's House and the Old Manse, not to express some part of his opinion on the men themselves. In both you get a vivid notion of Curtis's genius and of his literary method. He paints like an artist; but like an artist who sees something more than the surface of things. There can hardly be an American whose blood the mere name of Concord does not stir. Curtis, at any rate, was not that American. The quiet tone in which he writes will deceive nobody. The plain, the sluggish river, the river meadows 'whose coarse grass glitters apt for mowing in the early June morning,' the slumbering spell upon the place, the town with its stately sycamores and elms, the house where Emerson lived—all these are described as if for themselves, and then all at once you hear the ring of musketry and you see the 'panic-stricken retreat of the regulars, blackened and bloody.' It is only a sentence, but the 19th of April 1775 lives over again for you, because all the time it has been living and burning in Curtis himself. It is remarkable that so late as 1854 he still found himself able to quote, as if perchance to some readers they might still be new, Emerson's incomparable and immortal verses written when the little monument to commemorate the

Concord fight was set up in 1836. It is one of the half-dozen or so battle hymns we possess which are sure to live, including Holmes's lines which saved the frigate *Constitution* from being broken up, the John Brown hymn, Julia Ward Howe's Battle Hymn of the Republic, Stedman's John Brown of Ossawatimie, and perhaps one or two more.

It must be remembered that when Curtis wrote in 1854 Emerson had not yet attained to that authority or position which has since been conceded him as the first of American thinkers and writers. Curtis himself has no doubt on the matter, but he puts his opinion as it were experimentally before his readers. There is just enough of criticism to indicate his point of view, and there are touches which show how profound was his intellectual and spiritual sympathy with Emerson—

‘He stands like a sentinel. His look and manner and habit of thought cry, “Who goes there?” and if he does not hear the countersign, he brings the intruder to a halt. It is for this surprising fidelity and integrity that his influence has been so deep and sure and permanent upon the intellectual life of the young men of New England, and of Old England too, where, in Manchester, there were regular weekly meetings at which his works were read.’

So, only forty years ago so good an American as Curtis thought it desirable to mention to the American public that regular weekly meetings were held in Manchester at which Emerson's works were read. Yet some thirteen years before that date had appeared in England the first series of Emerson's *Essays* with a preface by Carlyle. And to-day Emerson is a household word in England, and neither in England nor America needs he any testimony or certificate to his supremacy. It

is the date of Curtis's essay, I repeat, which makes his testimony so interesting and important. He speaks of Emerson's *Nature* as 'fair and fascinating as Egeria to Numa wandering in the grove,' then adds—

'The essays, orations, and poems followed, developing and elaborating the same spiritual and heroic philosophy, applying it to life, history, and literature, with a vigour and richness so supreme that not only do many account him our truest philosopher, but others acknowledge him as our most characteristic poet.'

The tentative estimate again appears in that phrase; the estimate of the period. Yet, on the whole, there are few essays, critical or otherwise, from which the student who cares to understand the nature and sources of Emerson's thought will get more help than from this. Emerson himself must have delighted to find his friend tracing them all, so far as they had any relation to physical influences, to 'the underived sweetness of the open Concord sky and the spacious breadth of the Concord horizon.'

Curtis represents, no doubt, what may prove to be a transitory phase of American literature. Even now, in the latest as well as in the earliest essays in this delightful volume, there is a flavour as of something that is passing away. The leisureliness, the dignity, the marked and sometimes almost elaborate courtesy of manner, the style in which the absence of all impatience is only one mark of its invariable distinction—are those of to-day? The style flows on with the smoothness of the Concord River itself, but without its shallows or sluggishness. There are flowers upon its surface and it mirrors the heavens above. In the latest paper, that on Oliver Wendell Holmes in 1891, the style has

gained in rapidity and in concision while losing nothing of its grace. He leaves out a good deal which earlier he put in, and every excision adds force to his expression. What a knowledge of American literature there is in this essay, and what ease of allusion to people and facts already more than half forgotten. Curtis grew up while they were still fresh, and he has refreshed his memory, if need were, at the fullest fountain.

‘Turning over the noble volumes of Stedman and Miss Hutchinson in which, as on a vast plain, the whole line of American literature is drawn up for inspection and review, and marches past like the ghostly midnight columns of Napoleon’s grand army, we cannot quarrel with the verdict of time nor feel that injustice has been done to Glamis or Cawdor.’

That is a fine tribute to the monumental *Library of American Literature* of which Mr. Stedman and Miss Hutchinson were the editors; an invaluable work which but for them might have waited long to get itself done, nor ever have been done equally well. ‘There are singers of a day,’ says Curtis, ‘but not less singers because they are of a day.’ It is true, and true also of writers who are not singers, and both have found an honourable resting-place in this capacious *Library*.

Criticism in these days gives itself some airs, and in its mimicry of scientific methods forgets sometimes its kinship to literature. Curtis might be a good adviser for critics of this pattern. To his eloquence or insight not many of them can pretend but at least they are human as he is human, and they cannot but feel the touches of nature and of human nature which abound in his pages. I quote but one concluding passage from the essay on Holmes—

'The kindly Master takes the reader by the button or lays his hand upon his shoulder, not with the rude familiarity of the bully or the boor, but with the courtesy of Montaigne, the friendliness of John Aubrey, or the wise cheer of Selden. The reader glows with the pleasure of an individual greeting, and a wide diocese of those whom the Autocrat never saw plume themselves proudly upon his personal acquaintance. . . . For just sixty years since his first gay and tender note was heard, Holmes has been fulfilling the promise of his matin song. He has become a patriarch of our literature, and all his countrymen are his lovers.'

The essay on Sir Philip Sidney is, perhaps, even more autobiographical than that on Emerson. Sidney was a hero after Curtis's own heart. What he has written of the Elizabethan Knight is among the most exquisite of his achievements as mere literature, and one of the best studies of one of the most beautiful human natures in history. Yet he seems to have doubted whether it could be published. It was written in 1857. It appears for the first time in this volume. If there were nothing else in it, the lover of the beautiful and of the heroic would enshrine the book among his treasures. The life of Sir Philip Sidney is here, the romance of his letters to Elizabeth dissuading her from the marriage with the Duke of Anjou; the *Defence of Poesy*; the fatal skirmish at Zutphen.

'This is the story of Philip Sidney. A letter, a book, a battle. How little to justify his unique fame! How invisible his performance among the illustrious events of his prodigious age! Yet is not the instinct of the human heart true; and in the stately society of his time, if Bacon were the philosopher, Shakespeare the poet,

Burleigh the counsellor, Raleigh the soldier, Drake the sailor, Hooker the theologian, Essex the courtier, Gresham the merchant, was not Philip Sidney as distinctively a gentleman?’

And was that why Curtis thought it discreet to let his essay remain in manuscript? Is it too late to say of Curtis himself what he says of Sidney? I hope not. There is still an audience which will welcome such an account of this excellent American, and recognise him most easily as having ‘that happy harmony of mind and temper, of enthusiasm and good sense, of accomplishment and capacity, which is described by that most exquisite and most abused word, gentleman.’

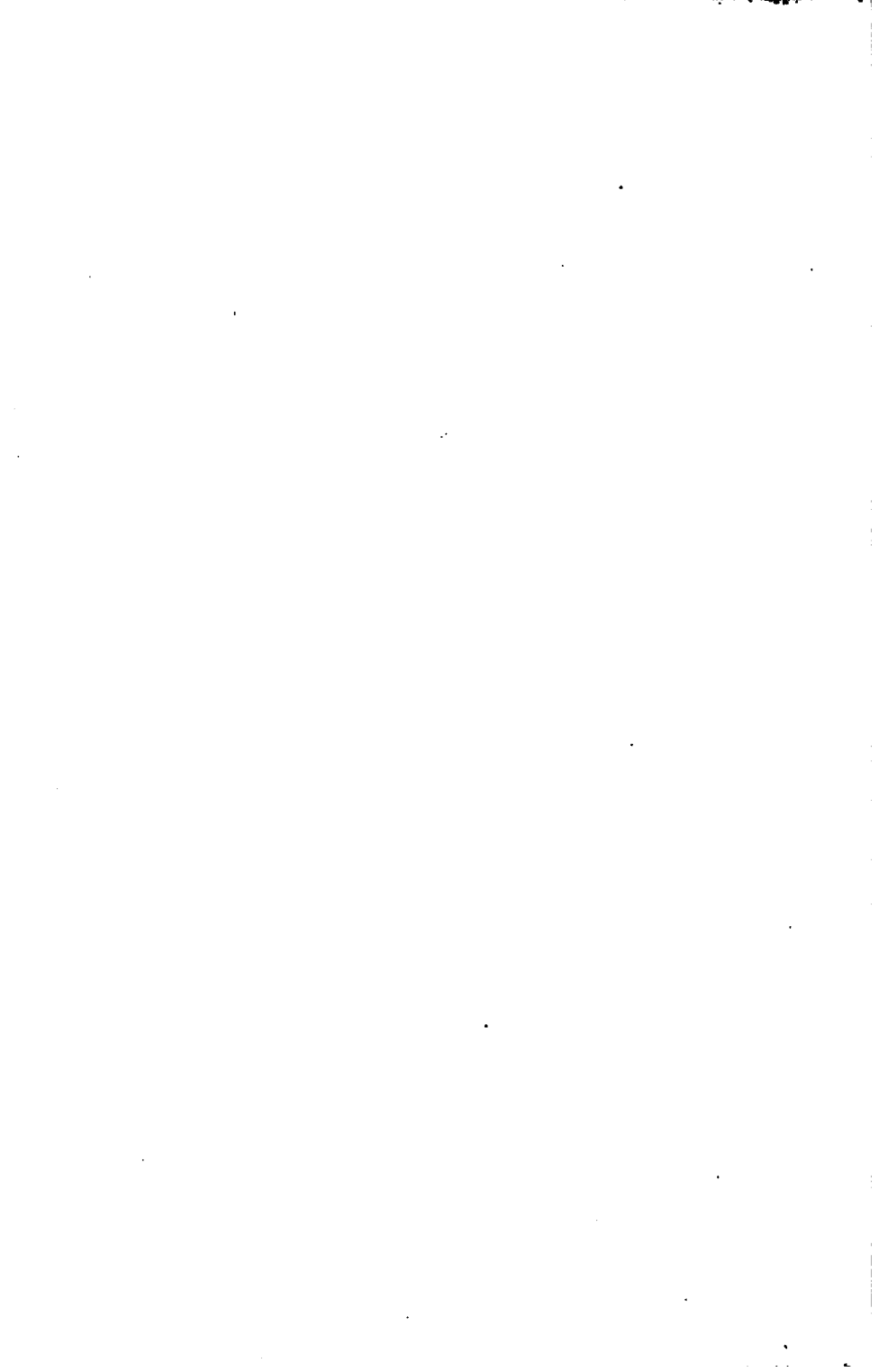
There follow some pages which if I could I would put into the hands of every young American. ‘Philip Sidney was not a gentleman because his grandfather was Duke of Northumberland and his father Lord Deputy of Ireland, but because he was himself generous, simple, truthful, noble, refined.’ Is that the true note, or is it not? Is there anything more American than his homage to youth as the mainspring of the world, or than his proud assertion that ‘there is no youth in history so romantic and beloved that in a thousand American homes you may not find his peer to-day’? It is evident that the later part of this essay was written long after 1857. We hear of Sherman ‘piercing the heart of the Rebellion,’ and of Grant’s ‘perfect victory’; and ‘we live in a country which has been saved by its young men.’ And the patriot tried as by fire speaks out in more than one other passage; sometimes of reproach to the sordid spirit which stains some sections of society, and of rebuke to the carelessness about honesty and honour which is the mark of base politics;



sometimes in honourable tribute to 'that human love and faith and fidelity which, like day and night, like seedtime and harvest, shall never, never fail.' Such was the faith in which Curtis lived and died, and this it is which in this book he hands on to those who come after him; to those who shall be, like him, true Americans, and true citizens of a city greater than the great Republic.

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